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THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

VOL. I

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CAMBRIDGE: DEIGHTON BELL & CO.
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN CO.
BOMBAY: A. H. WHEELER & CO.

THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS:
THE ARABIAN NIGHTS'
ENTERTAINMENTS

TRANSLATED BY
EDWARD WILLIAM LANE

EDITED BY
STANLEY LANE-POOLE, M.A., LITT.D.

1338

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. I

892.713
Lane Poole



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P R E F A C E

FEW story-books have enjoyed the popularity of the "Arabian Nights." For two centuries children have marvelled at the wonders of the Eastern fairyland, and older readers have delighted in the picture of mediæval Arab life which the "Thousand and One Nights" unfold. It is singular that so little should be known of the origin and history of a book so renowned. We know that Galland discovered the Arabic original and published his French translation in 1704-1707, but of the date and place and manner of its composition we know scarcely anything. The native critics of Arabic literature paid small attention to a collection of romances which appeared to them (as one of them wrote) only as "a corrupt book of silly tales." A work called the "Thousand Nights" or "Thousand and One Nights" is referred to twice in the tenth century by Arabic historians, who say it was translated from a Persian story-book called the "Thousand Tales"; but we do not possess this Persian book, and have no means of determining how far it corresponded with the "Arabian Nights" as we know it, or how far the "Thousand and One Nights" of the tenth century resembled the book which Galland and Lane and others translated. All that we can safely deduce from these meagre references is that the framing scheme of the "Nights"—of the jealous Sultan who kills a wife every morning till Shahrazad keeps him interested in her stories—was borrowed from the Persian "Thousand Tales," and

that a few of these tales were apparently identical with some which are included in the "Arabian Nights."

The general character of the "Nights," however, is certainly not Persian. The people, whether the scene be laid in Persia or India or China, are Muslims, not Magians. Their manners and customs are not early Persian, but mainly mediæval Egyptian and Syrian, and here and there purely Arab. If more Egyptian than Syrian or Persian, the life described is broadly Mohammadan, and represents the mediæval "Arab" or Saracen, whatever his nationality, exactly as he lived in the "golden prime" of the Khalifehs of Baghdad. The thirteen tales (most of which are in this first volume) which alone are found in all the manuscripts, and which may be taken as the nucleus of the book, are Mohammadan stories, and may be referred with much probability to the period of the early 'Abbasid Khalifate of the eighth to the tenth centuries of our era. But the very plan of the work lent itself in the simplest manner to the story-teller's art. A night may be long or short, and stories may be added or omitted without altering the number of nights; and as the telling of popular tales in the East was always in the hands of professional *raconteurs*, the beloved of coffee-house frequenters, and was not tied down to written manuscripts, it is easy to see how the "Nights" came to include very diverse elements within their elastic limits, and how no two manuscripts agree in the order or identity or number of the tales. In short, the "Arabian Nights," founded on the Persian "Tales," formed a vehicle for every sort of Oriental fable, romance, and anecdote, and gradually grew in the hands of a long series of reciters from the early nucleus of the tenth century to the present form, containing elements which may be as late as the sixteenth. The Review at the end

of vol. iv epitomizes the evidence we possess on the history of the book.

Lane's "Thousand and One Nights" has been the standard version now for three-quarters of a century. It was written and published between 1838 and 1840, after the translator had devoted sixteen years to the study of Arabic, five of which were spent in Egypt, chiefly in Cairo, where he lived almost exclusively among the Mohammadans, "speaking their language, conforming to their general habits with the most scrupulous exactitude," as he says himself, "and received into their society on terms of perfect equality," though without professing their faith; and where he acquired that mastery of the language which made him the first Arabic scholar of Europe. He had already published in 1836 his account of the "Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians," which displayed his intimate acquaintance with a characteristic form of Mohammadan life and character. Cairo was then the city in which Arabian manners were still preserved in their integrity—such life and such manners as are reflected in the "Arabian Nights." With these qualifications, the work of translation offered few difficulties, and its value and popularity are attested by numerous reprints. It has been adversely criticized, but never on the ground of scholarship. No one has ever ventured to challenge the accuracy of the translation. It was criticized for its style and for its omissions.

As to the first, the English is old-fashioned—not necessarily a fault—with a flavour of the Authorized Version—an unquestioned merit; it is too full of Latin as opposed to Saxon derivatives; it often lacks fire and force. But so does its original; and the very deliberation and smooth level of Lane's prose, with its elderly staidness, convey approximately the impression produced by the original, which itself is not modern colloquial Arabic, but a decidedly tame

imitation of the literary style of the Middle Ages. The slightly antiquated tone of the translation is more appropriate than the mixture of slang and archaism with which more recent translators have sought to reproduce the effect of the Arabic, though no one can deny the force and beauty of much of Mr. Payne's version.

With regard to the omissions, Lane's translation is intended for the general public of both sexes, and it was absolutely necessary to excise a number of words, phrases, and passages on the score of decency. Even a few complete tales had to be omitted, because they could not be purified without destruction. The "Arabian Nights" is not a prurient book, but in the original it often frankly describes things that we do not talk about, and it was inevitable that it must be carefully cleansed of such details if it were to be placed in every one's hands.* Such omissions are obviously justified.

* "I have thought it right to omit such tales, anecdotes, &c., as are comparatively uninteresting or on any account objectionable. In other words, I insert nothing that I deem greatly inferior in interest to the tales in the old version. Certain passages which, in the original work, are of an objectionable nature, I have slightly varied ; but in doing this, I have been particularly careful to render them so as to be perfectly agreeable with Arab manners and customs. It was originally my intention to omit almost the whole of the poetry, thinking that the loss of measure and rhyme, and the impossibility of preserving the examples of paronomasia and some other figures with which they abound, would render translations of them generally intolerable to the reader : but afterwards I reflected that the character of the work would be thus greatly altered ; and its value, as illustrating Arab manners and feelings, much diminished. I therefore determined to preserve a considerable number of select pieces, chosen either for their relative merits or because required by the context. The number of those comprised in the first volume of my translation is nearly half of the number contained in the corresponding portion of the original work ; but in several cases I have omitted one or more verses of a piece as unsuitable, or for some other reason ; and in a few instances I have given only the first verse or the first couplet." (Original Preface.)

The other omissions consist in leaving out a few tales which Lane regarded as tedious and uninteresting or as practically replicas of others already included. His judgment is, of course, open to argument, and some of the omitted tales might perhaps have been retained with advantage, and would possibly have been included if the bulk of the work had not exceeded the original publisher's limit.* Galland, the earliest translator of the "Nights," omitted a third more than Lane did, and I am not sure that the Frenchman's fine literary instinct was at fault, and that Lane did not err rather on the side of redundancy than of reduction. Besides the tales themselves, there are numerous anecdotes interspersed among the longer stories; these are often historical and characteristic, but many are foolish or repeat each other, and some are decidedly nauseous. Lane wisely omitted nearly half of them. Altogether his translation contains about two-thirds of the complete text from which he worked, and by far the best part of the "Thousand and One Nights."

The text from which Lane's translation was made was published at Bulak (Cairo), in 2 vols., 1835 (1251 A.H.). "I have taken as my general standard of the

* Ten of the fourteen tales omitted occur after the third and last volume of the translation was one-third printed (1840). Of the fourteen, five were omitted on the ground that they were inherently objectionable (The Seven Wezirs, of which Lane gave only an abstract; Delileh, Mesrur and Zeyn-el-Mawassif, the Merchant of 'Oman, and Kamar-ez-Zeman and the Jeweller's Wife); five because they resembled others in the collection (The Queen of the Serpents, Ardeshir and Hayat-en-Nufus, 'Ali Nur-ed-din and the Frank King's Daughter, Abu-l-Hasan of Khorasan, and 'Abd-Allah ibn Fadil); four because they were tedious or uninteresting ('Omar ibn En-No'man, of which, however, Lane translated the included tales of Taj-el-Muluk and 'Aziz and 'Azizeh; Taweddud, too learned and technical; Gharib and 'Ajib; and King Jeli'ad and his Wezir Shemmas).

original text the Cairo edition lately printed ; it being greatly superior to the other printed editions, and probably to every manuscript copy. It appears to agree almost exactly with the celebrated MS. of Von Hammer, than which no copy more copious, I believe, exists. . . . The manuscript from which it was printed was carefully collated and corrected by a very learned man, the Sheykh 'Abd-Er-Rahman Es-Safti Esh-Sharkawi, who also superintended the progress of the work through the press. But in addition to the value conferred upon it by the corrections of this sheykh, the copy from which the whole of my translation is made, except in a few instances, possesses an advantage which, I believe, renders it incomparably superior to any other now existing : it has been again revised and corrected, and illustrated with numerous manuscript notes, by a person whom I think I may safely pronounce the first philologist of the first Arab college of the present day, the sheykh Mohammad 'Eyyad Et-Tantawi, or, more properly, Et-Tanditai. His notes are chiefly philological, and explanatory of words which do not belong to the classical language." (Original Preface.) In addition to the Cairo (Bulak) text, which formed the basis of his work, Lane consulted and occasionally adopted the readings of the Calcutta edition of the first two hundred Nights (by Sheykh Ahmad Shirwani el-Yemeni, 2 vols., 1814, 1818), and the Breslau edition (by Habicht, 8 vols., 1825-1838, to the 703rd Night ; the continuation by Fleischer was not published until after Lane's version was finished).* He noted some of the more important variations presented by these

* My father, Edward Stanley Poole, for his (1859) edition of Lane's translation, also collated, at least in part, the complete Calcutta edition (by Sir W. H. Macnaghten, 1832-42), "for various readings, without finding any one of importance" (Editor's Preface, 1859).

texts, and also stated when he followed either of them in preference to the Cairo text. Such variations and deviations I have collected in a series of "Notes on the Text" at the end of each volume of this edition, for the use of students who read the Arabic with the aid of this translation. These critical notes are referred to by *numerals*, in distinction from the ordinary references to the explanatory notes at the foot of the page.

Besides removing the critical notes to the end of each volume, for the use of Arabic students, I have transferred the short explanatory notes from the end of each chapter to the foot of the page. In former editions all the notes, critical, explanatory, and digressive, were accumulated at the end of each chapter, to the inconvenience of the reader. The great bulk of these notes consisted in very full disquisitions on most branches of Mohammadan religion, superstitions, laws, customs, literature, dress,—indeed nearly all departments of Mohammadan or Arabian life, especially as observed in Cairo. The great value of these ample notes, as a kind of encyclopædia of Muslim life and manners, has been universally recognized ; but they are better read as a whole and in systematic order than in the form of notes scattered here and there at the ends of a score of chapters in three volumes, and such a systematic collection of them is found in the separate volume entitled "Arabian Society in the Middle Ages," which I arranged and edited many years ago. Of this collection Sir Richard Burton, who may be acquitted of any undue admiration, as well as of any servile regard for grammar, observed that "the student who adds the notes of Lane ('Arabian Society') to mine will know as much of the Moslem East and more than many Europeans who have spent half their lives in Orient lands." These long notes or rather excursus were out of place in a

story-book, however illustrative of Arabian life, and they are omitted in the present edition. Even the shorter notes, in explanation of the text, were too elaborate and sometimes redundant: I have therefore included only such as are really necessary for the understanding of the tales, and have given them in the most concise form, yet in Lane's words. When I have added anything the addition is indicated by square brackets. I believe that the present arrangement of the notes will be found much more convenient than the original plan both by students and by general readers.

The only other alteration is in the spelling of the Arabic and Persian names. When Lane adopted his system, the old *oo* and *ee* for the long vowels *ū* and *ī* were not yet obsolete in England, and long continued to be used in India. This mode of transliteration has been so completely discarded that no apology is necessary for abandoning it in this edition. No long marks or accents or diacritical dots are used, since they annoy the ordinary reader without really teaching him the pronunciation. For the benefit of those who wish to know precisely how the names are spelt in Arabic, a full transliteration, with long marks and dotted letters, as well as the English translations of the names, is given in the Index and Glossary. Arabic scholars will notice that I have not interfered with Lane's rule of employing both *a* and *e* to represent a single Arabic vowel (*fath*) as modified by consonants, and similarly *u* and *o* (*damm*); but in no case (except in a few familiar words) have I allowed *e* to represent the *i* (*kesr*) of the Arabic, or *ō* the *aw*, as the original system did, in conformity with Cairene pronunciation, but with risk of confusion to the student.

The division into chapters, though it forms no part of the Arabic text, has been retained, but I have added in the headlines the number of the Nights

contained in each chapter. The length of a Night varies greatly in the original Arabic: for example, the first hundred nights (without the Introduction) fill 213 pages of the Cairo edition; the second hundred, 149, the fifth only 94 pages. Each story ends in the course of a night, not at its close, for the obvious reason of preserving Shahrazad's life. The division of the Nights in the original and Lane's omission of the "tedious interruptions" of the stories are referred to on p. 17 of this volume.

In other respects this edition faithfully reproduces the text of the edition of 1859, which was laboriously collated, even to a comma, by my father, Edward Stanley Poole, with Lane's own annotated copy of the first edition. Beyond very careful collation, my father added only a few brief notes, chiefly historical, to his uncle's work. Part of his preface, which was based upon Lane's original preface, is incorporated in brackets in the Review at the end of vol. iv, where the sources and history of the "Thousand and One Nights" are considered. Later researches have contributed something to our knowledge of the sources, but very little to the clearing up of the history; but such new lights as have been thrown upon the subject are referred to in my additions to the Review. The bibliography of the "Nights," in its manuscripts, texts, translations, and critical notices, has been admirably set forth by M. Victor Chauvin (*Bibliographie des Ouvrages Arabes*, Parts IV and V).

Two stories, not included in Lane's translation because they were not in his Arabic text, are appended to this edition in deference more to their universal popularity than to any title to belong to the book of the "Thousand and One Nights." They occur in no manuscript or printed text of the collected tales, and though M. Zotenberg discovered an Arabic MS. of "Ala-ed-din," no one has yet lighted upon the original

of Galland's famous story of the "Forty Thieves." There are many other tales which have as much or as little right to be regarded as part of the "Nights," and which are published in various texts and translations; but it is generally understood that without "Aladdin" and "'Ali Baba" the "Arabian Nights" must be held incomplete. The former is reprinted from the translation I made from M. Zotenberg's Arabic text for the "Stories from the Arabian Nights," published by Messrs. Putnam in 1891, who have also kindly permitted me to reproduce in substance two paragraphs from the preface. "'Ali Baba" is from the usual English version after Galland, with only such emendations as seemed obvious.

STANLEY LANE-POOLE

WICKLOW,
20th June, 1906

CONTENTS OF VOL. I

	<small>PAGE</small>
Preface	v
INTRODUCTION	1

CHAPTER I

The Merchant and the Jinni	13
The First Sheykh and the Gazelle	16
The Second Sheykh and the two Black Hounds	19
The Third Sheykh and the Mule	22

CHAPTER II

The Fisherman	24
King Yunan and the Sage Duban	29
The Husband and the Parrot	33
The Envious Wezir and the Prince and the Ghuleh	35
King Yunan and the Sage Duban (continued)	36
The Fisherman (continued)	40
The Young King of the Black Islands	47

CHAPTER III

The Porter and the Ladies of Baghdad, and the Three Royal Mendicants	56
The First Royal Mendicant	68

	PAGE
The Second Royal Mendicant	74
The Envier and the Envied	81
The Second Royal Mendicant (continued)	83
The Third Royal Mendicant	91
The Ladies of Baghdad (continued)	104
The First of the Three Ladies of Baghdad	104
The Second of the Three Ladies of Baghdad	112
The Ladies of Baghdad (concluded)	117

CHAPTER IV

The Three Apples	120
Nur-ed-Din and his Son and Shems-ed-Din and his Daughter	127

CHAPTER V

The Humpback	169
The Christian Broker	175
The Sultan's Steward	188
The Jewish Physician	198
The Tailor	206
The Barber	219
The Barber's First Brother	221
The Barber's Second Brother	225
The Barber's Third Brother	228
The Barber's Fourth Brother	232
The Barber's Fifth Brother	235
The Barber's Sixth Brother	243
The Tailor (concluded)	248
The Humpback (concluded)	249

CHAPTER VI

	PAGE
Nur-ed-Din and Enis-el-Jelis	252

CHAPTER VII

Ghanim the Son of Eyyub, the Distracted Slave of Love	292
The Slave Kafur	296
Ghanim (concluded)	301

CHAPTER VIII

Taj-el-Muluk and the Lady Dunya	319
‘Aziz and ‘Azizeh	330
Taj-el-Muluk and the Lady Dunya (concluded)	361
FABLES	393
The Peacock, Peahen, Duck, Young Lion, &c.	393
The Fox and the Wolf	400
NOTES ON TEXT	411



THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Praise be to God, the Beneficent King, the Creator of the universe, who hath raised the heavens without pillars, and spread out the earth as a bed ; and blessing and peace be on the lord of apostles, our lord and our master Mohammad, and his Family ; blessing and peace, enduring and constant, unto the day of judgment.

To proceed :—The lives of former generations are a lesson to posterity ; that a man may review the remarkable events which have happened to others, and be admonished ; and may consider the history of people of preceding ages, and of all that hath befallen them, and be restrained. Extolled be the perfection of Him who hath thus ordained the history of former generations to be a lesson to those which follow. Such are the Tales of a Thousand and One Nights, with their romantic stories and their fables.

It is related (but God alone is all-knowing, as well as all-wise, and almighty, and all-bountiful,) that there was, in ancient times, a King¹ of the countries of India and China, possessing numerous troops, and guards, and servants, and

¹ [For critical notes indicated by numerals see end of volume.]

INTRODUCTION

domestic dependents : and he had two sons ; one of whom was a man of mature age ; and the other, a youth. Both of these princes were brave horsemen ; but especially the elder, who inherited the kingdom of his father, and governed his subjects with such justice that the inhabitants of his country and whole empire loved him. He was called King Shahriyar :² his younger brother was named Shah-Zeman,* and was King of Samarkand. The administration of their governments was conducted with rectitude, each of them ruling over his subjects with justice during a period of twenty years with the utmost enjoyment and happiness. After this period, the elder King felt a strong desire to see his brother, and ordered his Wezir † to repair to him and bring him.

Having taken the advice of the Wezir on this subject, he immediately gave orders to prepare handsome presents, such as horses adorned with gold and costly jewels, and memlukhs,‡ and beautiful virgins, and expensive stuffs. He then wrote a letter to his brother, expressive of his great desire to see him ; and having sealed it, and given it to the Wezir, together with the presents above mentioned, he ordered the minister to strain his nerves, and tuck up his skirts, and use all expedition in returning. The Wezir answered, without delay, I hear and obey ; and forthwith prepared for the journey : he packed his baggage, removed the burdens, and made ready all his provisions within three days ; and on the fourth day, he took leave of the King Shahriyar, and went forth towards the deserts and wastes. He proceeded night and day ; and each of the kings under the authority of King Shahriyar by whose residence he passed came forth to meet him, with costly presents, and gifts of gold and silver, and entertained him three days ; after which, on the fourth day, he accompanied him one day's journey, and took leave of him. Thus he continued on his way until he drew near to the city of Samarkand, when he sent forward a messenger to inform King Shah-

* [Shahriyar, 'Friend of the City ;' Shah-Zeman, 'King of the Age.' For translations of Arabic and Persian names see Index.]

† [In Persian and Turkish, Vezir ; popular, Vizier.]

‡ Male white slaves.

Zeman of his approach. The messenger entered the city, inquired the way to the palace, and, introducing himself to the King, kissed the ground before him, and acquainted him with the approach of his brother's Wezir ; upon which Shah-Zeman ordered the chief officers of his court, and the great men of his kingdom, to go forth a day's journey to meet him ; and they did so ; and when they met him, they welcomed him, and walked by his stirrups until they returned to the city. The Wezir then presented himself before the King Shah-Zeman, greeted him with a prayer for the divine assistance in his favour, kissed the ground before him, and informed him of his brother's desire to see him ; after which he handed to him the letter. The King took it, read it, and understood its contents ; and answered by expressing his readiness to obey the commands of his brother. But, said he (addressing the Wezir), I will not go until I have entertained thee three days. Accordingly, he lodged him in a palace befitting his rank, accommodated his troops in tents, and appointed them all things requisite in the way of food and drink : and so they remained three days. On the fourth day, he equipped himself for the journey, made ready his baggage, and collected together costly presents suitable to his brother's dignity.

These preparations being completed, he sent forth his tents and camels and mules and servants and guards, appointed his Wezir to be governor of the country during his absence, and set out towards his brother's dominions. At midnight, however, he remembered that he had left in his palace an article which he should have brought with him ; and having returned to the palace to fetch it, he there beheld his wife sleeping in his bed, and attended by a male negro slave, who had fallen asleep by her side. On beholding this scene, the world became black before his eyes ; and he said within himself, If this is the case when I have not departed from the city, what will be the conduct of this vile woman while I am sojourning with my brother ? He then drew his sword, and slew them both in the bed : after which he immediately returned, gave orders for departure, and journeyed to his brother's capital.

Shahriyar, rejoicing at the tidings of his approach, went

INTRODUCTION

forth to meet him, saluted him, and welcomed him with the utmost delight. He then ordered that the city should be decorated on the occasion, and sat down to entertain his brother with cheerful conversation : but the mind of King Shah-Zeman was distracted by reflections upon the conduct of his wife ; excessive grief took possession of him ; and his countenance became sallow ; and his frame, emaciated. His brother observed his altered condition, and, imagining that it was occasioned by his absence from his dominions, abstained from troubling him or asking respecting the cause, until after the lapse of some days, when at length he said to him, O my brother, I perceive that thy body is emaciated, and thy countenance is become sallow. He answered, O brother, I have an internal sore :—and he informed him not of the conduct of his wife which he had witnessed. Shahriyar then said, I wish that thou wouldest go out with me on a hunting excursion ; perhaps thy mind might so be diverted :—but he declined ; and Shahriyar went alone to the chase.

Now there were some windows in the King's palace commanding a view of his garden ; and while his brother was looking out from one of these, a door of the palace was opened, and there came forth from it twenty females and twenty male black slaves ; and the King's wife, who was distinguished by extraordinary beauty and elegance, accompanied them to a fountain, where they all disrobed themselves, and sat down together. The King's wife then called out, O Mes'ud ! and immediately a black slave came to her, and embraced her ; she doing the like. So also did the other slaves and the women ; and all of them continued revelling together until the close of the day. When Shah-Zeman beheld this spectacle, he said within himself, By Allah ! my affliction is lighter than this ! His vexation and grief were alleviated, and he no longer abstained from sufficient food and drink.

When his brother returned from his excursion, and they had saluted each other, and King Shahriyar observed his brother Shah-Zeman, that his colour had returned, that his face had recovered the flush of health, and that he ate with appetite, after his late abstinence, he was surprised, and

said, O my brother, when I saw thee last, thy countenance was sallow, and now thy colour hath returned to thee : acquaint me with thy state.—As to the change of my natural complexion, answered Shah-Zeman, I will inform thee of its cause ; but excuse my explaining to thee the return of my colour.—First, said Shahriyar, relate to me the cause of the change of thy proper complexion, and of thy weakness : let me hear it.—Know then, O my brother, he answered, that when thou sentest thy Wezir to me to invite me to thy presence, I prepared myself for the journey, and when I had gone forth from the city, I remembered that I had left behind me the jewel that I have given thee ; I therefore returned to my palace for it, and there I found my wife sleeping in my bed, and attended by a black male slave ; and I killed them both, and came to thee : but my mind was occupied by reflections upon this affair, and this was the cause of the change of my complexion, and of my weakness : now, as to the return of my colour, excuse my informing thee of its cause.—But when his brother heard these words, he said, I conjure thee by Allah that thou acquaint me with the cause of the return of thy colour :—so he repeated to him all that he had seen. I would see this, said Shahriyar, with my own eye.—Then, said Shah-Zeman, give out that thou art going again to the chase, and conceal thyself here with me, and thou shalt witness this conduct, and obtain ocular proof of it.

Shahriyar, upon this, immediately announced that it was his intention to make another excursion. The troops went out of the city with the tents, and the King followed them ; and after he had reposed awhile in the camp, he said to his servants, Let no one come in to me :—and he disguised himself, and returned to his brother in the palace, and sat in one of the windows overlooking the garden ; and when he had been there a short time, the women and their mistress entered the garden with the black slaves, and did as his brother had described, continuing so until the hour of the afternoon-prayer.

When King Shahriyar beheld this occurrence, reason fled from his head, and he said to his brother Shah-Zeman, Arise, and let us travel whither we please, and renounce the

regal state, until we see whether such a calamity as this have befallen any other person like unto us ; and if not, our death will be preferable to our life. His brother agreed to his proposal, and they went out from a private door of the palace, and journeyed continually, days and nights, until they arrived at a tree in the midst of a meadow, by a spring of water, on the shore of the sea. They drank of this spring, and sat down to rest ; and when the day had a little advanced, the sea became troubled before them, and there arose from it a black pillar, ascending towards the sky, and approaching the meadow. Struck with fear at the sight, they climbed up into the tree, which was lofty ; and thence they gazed to see what this might be : and behold, it was a Jinni,* of gigantic stature, broad-fronted and bulky, bearing on his head a chest. He landed, and came to the tree into which the two Kings had climbed, and, having seated himself beneath it, opened the chest, and took out of it another box, which he also opened ; and there came forth from it a young woman, fair and beautiful, like the shining sun. When the Jinni cast his eyes upon her, he said, O lady of noble race, whom I carried off on thy wedding-night, I have a desire to sleep a little :—and he placed his head upon her knee, and slept. The damsel then raised her head towards the tree, and saw there the two Kings ; upon which she removed the head of the Jinni from her knee, and, having placed it on the ground, stood under the tree, and made

* Sing. of Jinn (Genii), beings created of fire. The species of Jinn is said to have been created some thousands of years before Adam. According to a tradition from the Prophet, this species consists of five orders or classes ; namely, Jann (who are the least powerful of all), Jinn, Sheytans (or* Devils), 'Efrits, and Marids. The last, it is added, are the most powerful ; and the Jann are transformed Jinn ; like as certain apes and swine were transformed men. The terms Jinn and Jann, however, are generally used indiscriminately, as names of the whole species (including the other orders above mentioned), whether good or bad ; the former term is the more common. [Iblis is Satan, their King.] "Sheytan" is commonly used to signify any evil Jinn. An 'Efrit is a powerful evil Jinni : a Marid, an evil Jinni of the most powerful class. The Jinn (but generally speaking, evil ones) are called by the Persians Divs ; the most powerful evil Jinn, Narahs (which signifies "males," though they are said to be males and females) ; the good Jinn, Peris, though this term is commonly applied to females.

signs to the two Kings, as though she would say, Come down, and fear not this 'Efrit. They answered her, We conjure thee by Allah that thou excuse us in this matter, But she said, I conjure you by the same that ye come down ; and if ye do not, I will rouse this 'Efrit, and he shall put you to a cruel death. So, being afraid, they came down to her ; and, after they had remained with her as long as she required, she took from her pocket a purse, and drew out from this a string, upon which were ninety-eight seal-rings ;³ and she said to them, Know ye what are these ? They answered, We know not.—The owners of these rings, said she, have, all of them, been admitted to converse with me, like as ye have, unknown to this foolish 'Efrit ; therefore, give me your two rings, ye brothers. So they gave her their two rings from their fingers ; and she then said to them, This 'Efrit carried me off on my wedding-night, and put me in the box, and placed the box in the chest, and affixed to the chest seven locks, and deposited me, thus imprisoned, in the bottom of the roaring sea, beneath the dashing waves ; not knowing that, when one of our sex desires to accomplish any object, nothing can prevent her. In accordance with this, says one of the poets :—

Never trust in women ; nor rely upon their vows ;
 For their pleasure and displeasure depend upon their passions.
 They offer a false affection ; for perfidy lurks within their clothing.
 By the tale of Yusuf be admonished, and guard against their stratagems.
 Dost thou not consider that Iblis ejected Adam by means of woman ?

And another poet says :—

Abstain from censure ; for it will strengthen the censured, and increase desire into violent passion.
 If I suffer such passion, my case is but the same as that of many a man before me :
 For greatly indeed to be wondered at is he who hath kept himself safe from women's artifice.

When the two Kings heard these words from her lips, they were struck with the utmost astonishment, and said, one to the other, If this is an 'Efrit, and a greater calamity hath happened unto him than that which hath befallen us,

INTRODUCTION

this is a circumstance that should console us:—and immediately they departed, and returned to the city.

As soon as they had entered the palace, Shahriyar caused his wife to be beheaded, and in like manner the women and black slaves; and thenceforth he made it his regular custom, every time that he took a virgin to his bed, to kill her at the expiration of the night. Thus he continued to do during a period of three years; and the people raised an outcry against him, and fled with their daughters, and there remained not a virgin in the city of a sufficient age for marriage. Such was the case when the King ordered the Wezir to bring him a virgin according to his custom; and the Wezir went forth and searched, and found none; and he went back to his house enraged and vexed, fearing what the King might do to him.

Now the Wezir had two daughters; the elder of whom was named Shahrazad; and the younger, Dunyazad. The former had read various books of histories, and the lives of preceding kings, and stories of past generations: it is asserted that she had collected together a thousand books of histories, relating to preceding generations and kings, and works of the poets: and she said to her father on this occasion, Why do I see thee thus changed, and oppressed with solicitude and sorrows? It has been said by one of the poets:—

Tell him who is oppressed with anxiety, that anxiety will not last:
As happiness passeth away, so passeth away anxiety.

When the Wezir heard these words from his daughter, he related to her all that had happened to him with regard to the King: upon which she said, By Allah, O my father, give me in marriage to this King: either I shall die, and be a ransom for one of the daughters of the Muslims, or I shall live, and be the cause of their deliverance from him.⁴—I conjure thee by Allah, exclaimed he, that thou expose not thyself to such peril:—but she said, It must be so. Then, said he, I fear for thee that the same will befall thee that happened in the case of the Ass and the Bull and the husbandman.—And what, she asked, was that, O my father?

Know, O my daughter, said the Wezir, that there was a certain merchant, who possessed wealth and cattle, and had a wife and children ; and God, whose name be exalted, had also endowed him with the knowledge of the languages of beasts and birds. The abode of this merchant was in the country ; and he had, in his house, an ass and a bull. When the bull came to the place where the ass was tied, he found it swept and sprinkled ; in his manger were sifted barley and sifted cut straw, and the ass was lying at his ease ; his master being accustomed only to ride him occasionally, when business required, and soon to return : and it happened, one day, that the merchant overheard the bull saying to the ass, May thy food benefit thee ! I am oppressed with fatigue, while thou art enjoying repose : thou eatest sifted barley, and men serve thee ; and it is only occasionally that thy master rides thee, and returns ; while I am continually employed in ploughing, and turning the mill.—The ass answered,⁵ When thou goest out to the field, and they place the yoke upon thy neck, lie down, and do not rise again, even if they beat thee ; or, if thou rise, lie down a second time ; and when they take thee back, and place the beans before thee, eat them not, as though thou wert sick : abstain from eating and drinking a day, or two days, or three ; and so shalt thou find rest from trouble and labour.—Accordingly, when the driver came to the bull with his fodder, he ate scarcely any of it ; and on the morrow, when the driver came again to take him to plough, he found him apparently quite infirm : so the merchant said, Take the ass, and make him draw the plough in his stead all the day. The man did so ; and when the ass returned at the close of the day, the bull thanked him for the favour he had conferred upon him by relieving him of his trouble on that day ; but the ass returned him no answer, for he repented most grievously. On the next day, the ploughman came again, and took the ass, and ploughed with him till evening ; and the ass returned with his neck flayed by the yoke, and reduced to an extreme state of weakness ; and the bull looked upon him, and thanked and praised him. The ass exclaimed, I was living at ease, and nought but my meddling hath injured me ! Then said he to the

INTRODUCTION

bull, Know that I am one who would give thee good advice : I heard our master say, If the bull rise not from his place, take him to the butcher, that he may kill him, and make a nat⁴ * of his skin :—I am therefore in fear for thee, and so I have given thee advice ; and peace be on thee !—When the bull heard these words of the ass, he thanked him, and said, To-morrow I will go with alacrity :—so he ate the whole of his fodder, and even licked the manger.—Their master, meanwhile, was listening to their conversation.

On the following morning, the merchant and his wife went to the bull's crib, and sat down there ; and the driver came, and took out the bull ; and when the bull saw his master, he shook his tail, and showed his alacrity by sounds and actions, bounding about in such a manner that the merchant laughed until he fell backwards. His wife, in surprise, asked him, At what dost thou laugh ? He answered, At a thing that I have heard and seen ; but I cannot reveal it ; for if I did, I should die. She said, Thou must inform me of the cause of thy laughter, even if thou die.—I cannot reveal it, said he : the fear of death prevents me.—Thou laughedst only at *me*, she said ; and she ceased not to urge and importune him until he was quite overcome and distracted. So he called together his children, and sent for the Kadi and witnesses, that he might make his will, and reveal the secret to her, and die : for he loved her excessively, since she was the daughter of his paternal uncle, and the mother of his children, and he had lived with her to the age of a hundred and twenty years. Having assembled her family and his neighbours, he related to them his story, and told them that as soon as he revealed his secret he must die ; upon which every one present said to her, We conjure thee by Allah that thou give up this affair, and let not thy husband, and the father of thy children, die. But she said, I will not desist until he tell me, though he die for it. So they ceased to solicit her ; and the merchant left them, and went to the stable to perform the ablution, and then to return, and tell them the secret, and die.

Now he had a cock, with fifty hens under him, and he

* Nat⁴ : * a large round piece of leather which, spread upon the ground, serves as a table for dinner, etc.

had also a dog ; and he heard the dog call to the cock, and reproach him, saying, Art thou happy when our master is going to die ? The cock asked, How so ?—and the dog related to him the story ; upon which the cock exclaimed, By Allah ! our master has little sense : I have *fifty* wives ; and I please this, and provoke that ; while *he* has but *one* wife, and cannot manage this affair with her : why does he not take some twigs of the mulberry-tree, and enter her chamber, and beat her until she dies or repents ? She would never, after that, ask him a question respecting anything.—And when the merchant heard the words of the cock, as he addressed the dog, he recovered his reason, and made up his mind to beat her.—Now, said the Wezir to his daughter Shahrazad, perhaps I may do to thee as the merchant did to his wife. She asked, And what did he ? He answered, He entered her chamber, after he had cut off some twigs of the mulberry-tree, and hidden them there ; and then said to her, Come into the chamber, that I may tell thee the secret while no one sees me, and then die :—and when she had entered, he locked the chamber-door upon her, and beat her until she became almost senseless and cried out, I repent :—and she kissed his hands and his feet, and repented, and went out with him ; and all the company, and her own family, rejoiced ; and they lived together in the happiest manner until death.

When the Wezir's daughter heard the words of her father, she said to him, It must be as I have requested. So he arrayed her, and went to the King Shahriyar. Now she had given directions to her young sister, saying to her, When I have gone to the King, I will send to request thee to come ; and when thou comest to me, and seest a convenient time, do thou say to me, O my sister, relate to me some strange story to beguile our waking hour :—and I will relate to thee a story that shall, if it be the will of God, be the means of procuring deliverance.

Her father, the Wezir, then took her to the King, who, when he saw her, was rejoiced, and said, Hast thou brought me what I desired ? He answered, Yes. When the King, therefore, introduced himself to her, she wept ; and he said to her, What aileth thee ? She answered, O King, I have

INTRODUCTION

a young sister, and I wish to take leave of her. So the King sent to her ; and she came to her sister, and embraced her, and sat near the foot of the bed ; and after she had waited for a proper opportunity, she said, By Allah ! O my sister, relate to us a story to beguile the waking hour of our night. Most willingly, answered Shahrazad, if this virtuous King permit me. And the King, hearing these words, and being restless, was pleased with the idea of listening to the story ; and thus, on the first night of the thousand and one, Shahrazad commenced her recitations.

CHAPTER I

[NIGHTS 1—3]

THE STORY OF THE MERCHANT AND THE JINNI

It has been related to me, O happy King, said Shahrazad, that there was a certain merchant who had great wealth, and traded extensively with surrounding countries ; and one day he mounted his horse, and journeyed to a neighbouring country to collect what was due to him, and, the heat oppressing him, he sat under a tree, in a garden, and put his hand into his saddle-bag,⁷ and ate a morsel of bread and a date which were among his provisions. Having eaten the date, he threw aside the stone, and immediately there appeared before him an 'Efrit, of enormous height, who, holding a drawn sword in his hand, approached him, and said, Rise, that I may kill thee, as thou hast killed my son. The merchant asked him, How have I killed thy son ? He answered, When thou atest the date, and threwest aside the stone, it struck my son upon the chest, and, as fate had decreed against him, he instantly died.

The merchant,⁸ on hearing these words, exclaimed, Verily to God we belong, and verily to Him we must return ! There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great ! If I killed him, I did it not intentionally, but without knowing it ; and I trust in thee that thou wilt pardon me.—The Jinni answered, Thy death is indispensable, as thou hast killed my son :—and so saying, he dragged him, and threw him on the ground, and raised his arm to strike him with the sword. The merchant, upon this, wept bitterly, and said to the Jinni, I commit my affair unto God,

for no one can avoid what He hath decreed:—and he continued his lamentation, repeating the following verses:—

Time consists of two days; this, bright; and that, gloomy: and life, of two moieties; this, safe; and that, fearful.
 Say to him who hath taunted us on account of misfortunes, Doth fortune oppose any but the eminent?
 Dost thou not observe that corpses float upon the sea, while the precious pearls remain in its furthest depths?
 When the hands of time play with us, misfortune is imparted to us by its protracted kiss.
 In the heaven are stars that cannot be numbered; but none is eclipsed save the sun and the moon.
 How many green and dry trees are on the earth; but none is assailed with stones save that which beareth fruit!
 Thou thoughtest well of the days when they went well with thee, and fearedst not the evil that destiny was bringing.

—When he had finished reciting these verses, the Jinni said to him, Spare thy words, for thy death is unavoidable.

Then said the merchant, Know, O 'Efrit, that I have debts to pay, and I have much property, and children, and a wife, and I have pledges also in my possession: let me, therefore, go back to my house, and give to every one his due, and then I will return to thee: I bind myself by a vow and covenant that I will return to thee, and thou shalt do what thou wilt; and God is witness of what I say.—Upon this, the Jinni accepted his covenant, and liberated him; granting him a respite until the expiration of the year.

The merchant, therefore, returned to his town, accomplished all that was upon his mind to do, paid every one what he owed him, and informed his wife and children of the event which had befallen him; upon hearing which, they and all his family and women wept. He appointed a guardian over his children, and remained with his family until the end of the year; when he took his grave-clothes under his arm, bade farewell to his household and neighbours, and all his relations, and went forth, in spite of himself; his family raising cries of lamentation, and shrieking.

He proceeded until he arrived at the garden before mentioned; and it was the first day of the new year; and as he sat, weeping for the calamity which he expected soon to befall him, a sheykh, advanced in years, approached him,

leading a gazelle with a chain attached to its neck. This sheykh saluted the merchant, wishing him a long life, and said to him, What is the reason of thy sitting alone in this place, seeing that it is a resort of the Jinn? The merchant therefore informed him of what had befallen him with the 'Efrit, and of the cause of his sitting there; at which the sheykh, the owner of the gazelle, was astonished, and said, By Allah, O my brother, thy faithfulness is great, and thy story is wonderful! if it were engraved upon the intellect, it would be a lesson to him who would be admonished!— And he sat down by his side, and said, By Allah, O my brother, I will not quit this place until I see what will happen unto thee with this 'Efrit. So he sat down, and conversed with him. And the merchant became almost senseless; fear entered him, and terror, and violent grief, and excessive anxiety. And as the owner of the gazelle sat by his side, lo, a second sheykh approached them, with two black hounds, and inquired of them, after saluting them, the reason of their sitting in that place, seeing that it was a resort of the Jann: and they told him the story from beginning to end. And he had hardly sat down when there approached them a third sheykh, with a dapple mule; and he asked them the same question, which was answered in the same manner.

Immediately after, the dust was agitated, and became an enormous revolving pillar, approaching them from the midst of the desert; and this dust subsided, and behold, the Jinni, with a drawn sword in his hand; his eyes casting forth sparks of fire. He came to them, and dragged from them the merchant, and said to him, Rise, that I may kill thee, as thou killedst my son, the vital spirit of my heart. And the merchant wailed and wept; and the three sheykhs also manifested their sorrow by weeping and crying aloud and wailing: but the first sheykh, who was the owner of the gazelle, recovering his self-possession, kissed the hand of the 'Efrit, and said to him, O thou Jinni, and crown of the kings of the Jann, if I relate to thee the story of myself and this gazelle, and thou find it to be wonderful, and more so than the adventure of this merchant, wilt thou give up to me a third of thy claim to his blood? He answered, Yes, O

sheykh ; if thou relate to me the story, and I find it to be as thou hast said, I will give up to thee a third of my claim to his blood.

THE STORY OF THE FIRST SHEYKH AND THE GAZELLE

Then said the sheykh, Know, O 'Efrit, that this gazelle is the daughter of my paternal uncle, and she is of my flesh and my blood. I took her as my wife when she was young, and lived with her about thirty years ; but I was not blessed with a child by her ; so I took to me a concubine slave, and by her I was blessed with a male child, like the rising full moon, with beautiful eyes, and delicately-shaped eyebrows, and perfectly-formed limbs ; and he grew up by little and little until he attained the age of fifteen years. At this period, I unexpectedly had occasion to journey to a certain city, and went thither with a great stock of merchandise.

Now my cousin, this gazelle, had studied enchantment and divination from her early years ; and during my absence, she transformed the youth above mentioned into a calf ; and his mother, into a cow ; and committed them to the care of the herdsman : and when I returned, after a long time, from my journey, I asked after my son and his mother, and she said, Thy slave is dead, and thy son hath fled, and I know not whither he is gone. After hearing this, I remained for the space of a year with mourning heart and weeping eye, until the Festival of the Sacrifice ;* when I sent to the herdsman, and ordered him to choose for me a fat cow ; and he brought me one, and it was my concubine, whom this gazelle had enchanted. I tucked up my skirts and sleeves, and took the knife in my hand, and prepared myself to slaughter her ; upon which she moaned and cried so violently that I left her, and ordered the herdsman to kill and skin her : and he did so, but found in her neither fat

* The Great Festival, commencing on the 10th of Dhu-l-Hijjah, when the pilgrims, halting on their return from mount 'Arafat to Mekkeh, in the valley of Mine, perform their sacrifice.

nor flesh, nor anything but skin and bone ; and I repented of slaughtering her, when repentance was of no avail. I therefore gave her to the herdsman, and said to him, Bring me a fat calf : and he brought me my son, who was transformed into a calf. And when the calf saw me, he broke his rope, and came to me, and fawned upon me, and wailed and cried, so that I was moved with pity for him ; and I said to the herdsman, Bring me a cow, and let this—

Here Shahrazad perceived the light of morning, and discontinued the recitation with which she had been allowed thus far to proceed. Her sister said to her, How excellent is thy story ! and how pretty ! and how pleasant ! and how sweet !—but she answered, What is this in comparison with that which I will relate to thee in the next night, if I live, and the King spare me ! And the King said, By Allah, I will not kill her until I hear the remainder of her story. Thus they pleasantly passed the night until the morning, when the King went forth to his hall of judgment, and the Wezir went thither with the grave-clothes under his arm ; and the King gave judgment, and invested and displaced, until the close of the day, without informing the Wezir of that which had happened ; and the minister was greatly astonished. The court was then dissolved ; and the King returned to the privacy of his palace.

[On the second and each succeeding night, Shahrazad continued so to interest King Shahriyar by her stories as to induce him to defer putting her to death, in expectation that her fund of amusing tales would soon be exhausted ; and as this is expressed in the original work in nearly the same words at the close of every night, such repetitions will in the present translation be omitted.]

When the sheykh, continued Shahrazad, observed the tears of the calf, his heart sympathized with him, and he said to the herdsman, Let this calf remain with the cattle.— Meanwhile, the Jinni wondered at this strange story ; and the owner of the gazelle thus proceeded.

O lord of the kings of the Jann, while this happened, my cousin, this gazelle, looked on, and said, Slaughter this calf ; for he is fat : but I could not do it ; so I ordered the herdsman to take him back ; and he took him and went

away. And as I was sitting, on the following day, he came to me, and said, O my master, I have to tell thee something that thou wilt be rejoiced to hear; and a reward is due to me for bringing good news. I answered, Well:—and he said, O merchant, I have a daughter who learned enchantment in her youth from an old woman in our family; and yesterday, when thou gavest me the calf, I took him to her, and she looked at him, and covered her face, and wept, and then laughed, and said, O my father, hath my condition become so degraded in thy opinion that thou bringest before me strange men?—Where, said I, are any strange men? and wherefore didst thou weep and laugh? She answered, This calf that is with thee is the son of our master, the merchant, and the wife of our master hath enchanted both him and his mother; and this was the reason of my laughter; but as to the reason of my weeping, it was on account of his mother, because his father had slaughtered her.—And I was excessively astonished at this; and scarcely was I certain that the light of morning had appeared when I hastened to inform thee.

When I heard, O Jinni, the words of the herdsman, I went forth with him, intoxicated without wine, from the excessive joy and happiness that I received, and arrived at his house, where his daughter welcomed me, and kissed my hand; and the calf came to me, and fawned upon me. And I said to the herdsman's daughter, Is that true which thou hast said respecting this calf? She answered, Yes, O my master; he is verily thy son, and the vital spirit of thy heart.—O maiden, said I, if thou wilt restore him, all the cattle and other property of mine that thy father hath under his care shall be thine. Upon this, she smiled, and said, O my master, I have no desire for the property unless on two conditions: the first is, that thou shalt marry me to him; and the second, that I shall enchant her who enchanted him, and so restrain her; otherwise, I shall not be secure from her artifice. On hearing, O Jinni, these her words, I said, And thou shalt have all the property that is under the care of thy father besides; and as to my cousin, even her blood shall be lawful to thee. So, when she heard this, she took a cup, and filled it with water, and repeated a

spell over it, and sprinkled with it the calf, saying to him, If God created thee a calf, remain in this form, and be not changed; but if thou be enchanted, return to thy original form, by permission of God, whose name be exalted!—upon which he shook, and became a man; and I threw myself upon him, and said, I conjure thee by Allah that thou relate to me all that my cousin did to thee and to thy mother. So he related to me all that had happened to them both; and I said to him, O my son, God hath given thee one to liberate thee, and to avenge thee:—and I married to him, O Jinni, the herdsman's daughter; after which, she transformed my cousin into this gazelle. And as I happened to pass this way, I saw this merchant, and asked him what had happened to him; and when he had informed me, I sat down to see the result.—This is my story. The Jinni said, This is a wonderful tale; and I give up to thee a third of my claim to his blood.

The second sheykh, the owner of the two hounds, then advanced, and said to the Jinni, If I relate to thee the story of myself and these hounds, and thou find it to be in like manner wonderful, wilt thou remit to me, also, a third of thy claim to the blood of this merchant? The Jinni answered, Yes.

THE STORY OF THE SECOND SHEYKH AND THE TWO BLACK HOUNDS

Then said the sheykh, Know, O lord of the kings of the Jann, that these two hounds are my brothers. My father died, and left to us three thousand pieces of gold;* and I opened a shop to sell and buy. But one of my brothers made a journey, with a stock of merchandise, and was absent from us for the space of a year with the caravans; after which, he returned destitute. I said to him, Did I not advise thee to abstain from travelling? But he wept, and said, O my brother, God, to whom be ascribed all might and glory, decreed this event; and there is no longer any

* Dinar, about half-a-guinea.

profit in these words : I have nothing left. So I took him up into the shop, and then went with him to the bath, and clad him in a costly suit of my own clothing ; after which, we sat down together to eat ; and I said to him, O my brother, I will calculate the gain of my shop during the year, and divide it, exclusive of the principal, between me and thee. Accordingly, I made the calculation, and found my gain to amount to two thousand pieces of gold ; and I praised God, to whom be ascribed all might and glory, and rejoiced exceedingly, and divided the gain in two equal parts between myself and him.—My other brother then set forth on a journey ; and after a year, returned in the like condition ; and I did unto him as I had done to the former.

After this, when we had lived together for some time, my brothers again wished to travel, and were desirous that I should accompany them ; but I would not. What, said I, have ye gained in your travels, that I should expect to gain ? They importuned me ; but I would not comply with their request ; and we remained selling and buying in our shops a whole year. Still, however, they persevered in proposing that we should travel, and I still refused, until after the lapse of six entire years, when at last I consented, and said to them, O my brothers, let us calculate what property we possess. We did so, and found it to be six thousand pieces of gold : and I then said to them, We will bury half of it in the earth, that it may be of service to us if any misfortune befall us, in which case each of us shall take a thousand pieces, with which to traffic. Excellent is thy advice, said they. So I took the money and divided it into two equal portions, and buried three thousand pieces of gold ; and of the other half, I gave to each of them a thousand pieces. We then prepared merchandise, and hired a ship, and embarked our goods, and proceeded on our voyage for the space of a whole month, at the expiration of which we arrived at a city, where we sold our merchandise ; and for every piece of gold we gained ten.

And when we were about to set sail again, we found, on the shore of the sea, a maiden clad in tattered garments, who kissed my hand, and said to me, O my master, art thou possessed of charity and kindness ? If so, I will requite

thee for them. I answered, Yes, I have those qualities, though thou requite me not. Then said she, O my master, accept me as thy wife, and take me to thy country; for I give myself to thee: act kindly towards me; for I am one who requires to be treated with kindness and charity, and who will requite thee for so doing; and let not my present condition at all deceive thee. When I heard these words, my heart was moved with tenderness towards her, in order to the accomplishment of a purpose of God, to whom be ascribed all might and glory; and I took her, and clothed her, and furnished for her a place in the ship in a handsome manner, and regarded her with kind and respectful attention.

We then set sail; and I became most cordially attached to my wife, so that, on her account, I neglected the society of my brothers, who, in consequence, became jealous of me, and likewise envied me my wealth, and the abundance of my merchandise; casting the eyes of covetousness upon the whole of the property. They therefore consulted together to kill me, and take my wealth; saying, Let us kill our brother, and all the property shall be ours:—and the devil made these actions to seem fair in their eyes; so they came to me while I was sleeping by the side of my wife, and took both of us up, and threw us into the sea. But as soon as my wife awoke, she shook herself, and became transformed into a Jinniyeh.⁹ She immediately bore me away, and placed me upon an island, and, for a while, disappeared. In the morning, however, she returned, and said to me, I am thy wife, who carried thee, and rescued thee from death, by permission of God, whose name be exalted. Know that I am a Jinniyeh: I saw thee, and my heart loved thee for the sake of God; for I am a believer in God and his Apostle, God bless and save him! I came to thee in the condition in which thou sawest me, and thou didst marry me; and see, I have rescued thee from drowning. But I am incensed against thy brothers, and I must kill them.—When I heard her tale, I was astonished, and thanked her for what she had done;—But, said I, as to the destruction of my brothers, it is not what I desire. I then related to her all that had happened between myself and them from first to last; and when she had heard it, she said, I will, this

next night, fly to them, and sink their ship, and destroy them. But I said, I conjure thee by Allah that thou do it not ; for the author of the proverb saith, O thou benefactor of him who hath done evil, the action that he hath done is sufficient for him :—besides, they are at all events my brothers. She still, however, said, They must be killed ;—and I continued to propitiate her towards them : and at last she lifted me up, and soared through the air, and placed me on the roof of my house.

Having opened the doors, I dug up what I had hidden in the earth ; and after I had saluted my neighbours, and bought merchandise, I opened my shop. And in the following night, when I entered my house, I found these two dogs tied up in it ; and as soon as they saw me, they came to me, and wept, and clung to me ; but I knew not what had happened until immediately my wife appeared before me, and said, These are thy brothers. And who, said I, hath done this unto them ? She answered, I sent to my sister, and she did it ; and they shall not be restored until after the lapse of ten years. And I was now on my way to her, that she might restore them, as they have been in this state ten years, when I saw this man, and, being informed of what had befallen him, I determined not to quit the place until I should have seen what would happen between thee and him.—This is my story.—Verily, said the Jinni, it is a wonderful tale ; and I give up to thee a third of the claim that I had to his blood on account of his offence.

Upon this, the third sheykh, the owner of the mule, said to the Jinni, As to me, break not my heart if I relate to thee nothing more than this :—

THE STORY OF THE THIRD SHEYKH AND THE MULE¹⁰

The mule that thou seest was my wife : she became enamoured of a black slave ; and when I discovered her with him, she took a mug of water, and, having uttered a spell over it, sprinkled me, and transformed me into a dog.

In this state, I ran to the shop of a butcher, whose daughter saw me, and, being skilled in enchantment, restored me to my original form, and instructed me to enchant my wife in the manner thou beholdest.—And now I hope that thou wilt remit to me also a third of the merchant's offence. Divinely was he gifted who said,

Sow good, even on an unworthy soil; for it will not be lost wherever it is sown.

When the sheykh had thus finished his story, the Jinni shook with delight, and remitted the remaining third of his claim to the merchant's blood. The merchant then approached the sheykh, and thanked them, and they congratulated him on his safety; and each went his way.

But this, said Shahrazad, is not more wonderful than the story of the fisherman. The King asked her, And what is the story of the fisherman? And she related it as follows:—

CHAPTER II

[NIGHTS 3—9]

THE STORY OF THE FISHERMAN

THERE was a certain fisherman, advanced in age, who had a wife and three children ; and though he was in indigent circumstances, it was his custom to cast his net, every day, no more than four times. One day he went forth at the hour of noon to the shore of the sea, and put down his basket, and cast his net, and waited until it was motionless in the water, when he drew together its strings, and found it to be heavy : he pulled, but could not draw it up : so he took the end of the cord, and knocked a stake into the shore, and tied the cord to it. He then stripped himself, and dived round the net, and continued to pull until he drew it out: whereupon he rejoiced, and put on his clothes ; but when he came to examine the net, he found in it the carcass of an ass. At the sight of this he mourned, and exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great ! This is a strange piece of fortune !—And he repeated the following verse :—

O thou who occupiest thyself in the darkness of night, and in peril !

Spare thy trouble ; for the support of Providence is not obtained by toil !

He then disencumbered his net of the dead ass, and wrung it out ; after which he spread it, and descended into the sea, and—exclaiming, In the name of God !—cast it again, and waited till it had sunk and was still, when he pulled it, and found it more heavy and more difficult to raise than on the former occasion. He therefore concluded that it was full of fish : so he tied it, and stripped, and plunged and dived, and pulled until he raised it, and drew it upon the shore ; when he found in it only a large jar, full

of sand and mud ; on seeing which, he was troubled in his heart, and repeated the following words of the poet :—

O angry fate, forbear ! or, if thou wilt not forbear, relent !
 Neither favour from fortune do I gain, nor profit from the work of
 my hands.
 I came forth to seek my sustenance, but have found it to be
 exhausted.
 How many of the ignorant are in splendour ! and how many of
 the wise, in obscurity !

So saying, he threw aside the jar, and wrung out and cleansed his net ; and, begging the forgiveness of God for his impatience, returned to the sea the third time, and threw the net, and waited till it had sunk and was motionless : he then drew it out, and found in it a quantity of broken jars and pots.

Upon this, he raised his head towards heaven, and said, O God, Thou knowest that I cast not my net more than four times ; and I have now cast it three times ! Then—exclaiming, In the name of God !—he cast the net again into the sea, and waited till it was still ; when he attempted to draw it up, but could not, for it clung to the bottom. And he exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God !—and stripped himself again, and dived round the net, and pulled it until he raised it upon the shore ; when he opened it, and found in it a bottle of brass, filled with something, and having its mouth closed with a stopper of lead, bearing the impression of the seal of our lord Suleyman.*

* No man ever obtained such absolute power over the Jinn as Suleyman Ibn-Da'ud (Solomon, the Son of David). This he did by virtue of a most wonderful talisman, which is said to have come down to him from heaven. It was a seal-ring, upon which was engraved "the most great name" of God ; and was partly composed of brass, and partly of iron. With the brass he stamped his written commands to the good Jinn ; with the iron [which they greatly dread], those to the evil Jinn, or Devils. Over both orders he had unlimited power ; as well as over the birds and the winds, and, as is generally said, the wild beasts. His Wezir, Asaf the son of Barkhiya, is also said to have been acquainted with "the most great name," by uttering which, the greatest miracles may be performed ; even that of raising the dead. By virtue of this name, engraved on his ring, Suleyman compelled the Jinn to assist in building the Temple of Jerusalem, and in various other works. Many of the evil Jinn he converted to the true faith ; and many others of this class, who remained obstinate in infidelity, he confined in prisons.

At the sight of this, the fisherman was rejoiced, and said, This I will sell in the copper-market ; for it is worth ten pieces of gold. He then shook it, and found it to be heavy, and said, I must open it, and see what is in it, and store it in my bag ; and then I will sell the bottle in the copper-market. So he took out a knife, and picked at the lead until he extracted it from the bottle. He then laid the bottle on the ground, and shook it, that its contents might pour out ; but there came forth from it nothing but smoke, which ascended towards the sky, and spread over the face of the earth ; at which he wondered excessively. And after a little while, the smoke collected together, and was condensed, and then became agitated, and was converted into an 'Efrit, whose head was in the clouds, while his feet rested upon the ground : his head was like a dome : his hands were like winnowing forks ; and his legs, like masts : his mouth resembled a cavern : his teeth were like stones ; his nostrils, like trumpets ; and his eyes, like lamps ; and he had dishevelled and dust-coloured hair.

When the fisherman beheld this 'Efrit, the muscles of his sides quivered, his teeth were locked together, his spittle dried up, and he saw not his way. The 'Efrit, as soon as he perceived him, exclaimed, There is no deity but God : Suleyman is the Prophet of God. O Prophet of God, slay me not ; for I will never again oppose thee in word, or rebel against thee in deed !—O Marid, said the fisherman, dost thou say, Suleyman is the Prophet of God ? Suleyman hath been dead a thousand and eight hundred years ; and we are now in the end of time. What is thy history, and what is thy tale, and what was the cause of thy entering this bottle ? When the Marid heard these words of the fisherman, he said, There is no deity but God ! Receive news, O fisherman !—Of what, said the fisherman, dost thou give me news ? He answered, Of thy being instantly put to a most cruel death. The fisherman exclaimed, Thou deservest, for this news, O master of the 'Efrits, the withdrawal of protection from thee, O thou remote ! * Wherefore wouldst thou kill me ? and what requires thy killing me, when I have liberated thee from the bottle, and rescued

* [Implying a malediction, but excepting bystanders].

thee from the bottom of the sea, and brought thee up upon the dry land?—The 'Efrit answered, Choose what kind of death thou wilt die, and in what manner thou shalt be killed.—What is my offence, said the fisherman, that this should be my recompense from thee? The 'Efrit replied, Hear my story, O fisherman.—Tell it then, said the fisherman, and be short in thy words; for my soul hath sunk down to my feet.

Know then, said he, that I am one of the heretical Jinn: I rebelled against Suleyman the son of Da'ud; I and Sakhr the Jinni; and he sent to me his Wezir, Asaf the son of Barkhiya, who came upon me forcibly, and took me to him in bonds, and placed me before him: and when Suleyman saw me, he offered up a prayer for protection against me, and exhorted me to embrace the faith, and to submit to his authority; but I refused; upon which he called for this bottle, and confined me in it, and closed it upon me with the leaden stopper, which he stamped with the Most Great Name: he then gave orders to the Jinn, who carried me away, and threw me into the midst of the sea. There I remained a hundred years; and I said in my heart, Whosoever shall liberate me, I will enrich him for ever:—but the hundred years passed over me, and no one liberated me: and I entered upon another hundred years; and I said, Whosoever shall liberate me, I will open to him the treasures of the earth:—but no one did so: and four hundred years more passed over me, and I said, Whosoever shall liberate me, I will perform for him three wants:—but still no one liberated me. I then fell into a violent rage, and said within myself, Whosoever shall liberate me now, I will kill him; and only suffer him to choose in what manner he will die. And lo, now thou hast liberated me, and I have given thee thy choice of the manner in which thou wilt die.

When the fisherman had heard the story of the 'Efrit, he exclaimed, O Allah! that I should not have liberated thee but in such a time as this! Then said he to the 'Efrit, Pardon me, and kill me not, and so may God pardon thee; and destroy me not, lest God give power over thee to one who will destroy thee. The Marid answered, I must positively kill thee; therefore choose by what manner of

death thou wilt die. The fisherman then felt assured of his death; but he again implored the 'Efrit, saying, Pardon me by way of gratitude for my liberating thee.—Why, answered the 'Efrit, I am not going to kill thee but for that very reason, because thou hast liberated me.—O Sheykh of the 'Efrits, said the fisherman, do I act kindly towards thee, and dost thou recompense me with baseness? But the proverb lieth not that saith,—

• We did good to them, and they returned us the contrary; and such, by my life, is the conduct of the wicked.

Thus he who acteth kindly to the undeserving is recompensed in the same manner as the aider of Umm-'Amir.*

The 'Efrit, when he heard these words, answered by saying, Covet not life, for thy death is unavoidable. Then said the fisherman within himself, This is a Jinni, and I am a man; and God hath given me sound reason; therefore, I will now plot his destruction with my art and reason, like as he hath plotted with his cunning and perfidy. So he said to the 'Efrit, Hast thou determined to kill me? He answered, Yes. Then said he, By the Most Great Name engraved upon the seal of Suleyman, I will ask thee one question; and wilt thou answer it to me truly? On hearing the mention of the Most Great Name, the 'Efrit was agitated, and trembled, and replied, Yes; ask, and be brief. The fisherman then said, How wast thou in this bottle? It will not contain thy hand or thy foot; how then can it contain thy whole body?—Dost thou not believe that I was in it? said the 'Efrit. The fisherman answered, I will never believe thee until I see thee in it. Upon this, the 'Efrit shook, and became converted again into smoke, which rose to the sky, and then became condensed, and entered the bottle by little and little, until it was all enclosed; when the fisherman hastily snatched the sealed leaden stopper, and, having replaced it in the mouth of the bottle, called out to the 'Efrit, and said, Choose in what manner of death thou wilt die. I will assuredly throw thee here into the sea, and build me a house on this spot; and whosoever shall come here, I will prevent his fishing in this place, and

* The hyena.

will say to him, Here is an 'Efrit, who, to any person that liberates him, will propose various kinds of death, and then give him his choice of one of them. On hearing these words of the fisherman, the 'Efrit endeavoured to escape; but could not, finding himself restrained by the impression of the seal of Suleyman, and thus imprisoned by the fisherman as the vilest and filthiest and least of 'Efrits. The fisherman then took the bottle to the brink of the sea. The 'Efrit exclaimed, Nay ! nay !—to which the fisherman answered, Yea, without fail ! yea, without fail ! The Marid then addressing him with a soft voice and humble manner, said, What dost thou intend to do with me, O fisherman ? He answered, I will throw thee into the sea ; and if thou hast been there a thousand and eight hundred years, I will make thee to remain there until the hour of judgment. Did I not say to thee, Spare me, and so may God spare thee ; and destroy me not, lest God destroy thee ? But thou didst reject my petition, and wouldest nothing but treachery ; therefore God hath caused thee to fall into my hand, and I have betrayed thee.—Open to me, said the 'Efrit, that I may confer benefits upon thee. The fisherman replied, Thou liest, thou accursed ! I and thou are like the Wezir of King Yunan and the sage Duban.¹¹—What, said the 'Efrit, was the case of the Wezir of King Yunan and the sage Duban, and what is their story ? The fisherman answered as follows :—

THE STORY OF KING YUNAN AND THE SAGE DUBAN

Know, O 'Efrit, that there was, in former times, in the country of the Persians,¹² a monarch who was called King Yunan, possessing great treasures and numerous forces, valiant, and having troops of every description ; but he was afflicted with leprosy, which the physicians and sages had failed to remove ; neither their potions, nor powders, nor ointments were of any benefit to him ; and none of the physicians was able to cure him. At length there arrived at the

city of this king a great sage, stricken in years, who was called the sage Duban: he was acquainted with ancient Greek, Persian, modern Greek, Arabic, and Syriac books, and with medicine and astrology, both with respect to their scientific principles and the rules of their practical applications for good and evil; as well as the properties of plants, dried and fresh; the injurious and the useful: he was versed in the wisdom of the philosophers, and embraced a knowledge of all the medical and other sciences.

After this sage had arrived in the city, and remained in it a few days, he heard of the case of the King, of the leprosy with which God had afflicted him, and that the physicians and men of science had failed to cure him. In consequence of this information, he passed the next night in deep study; and when the morning came, and diffused its light, and the sun saluted the Ornament of the Good,* he attired himself in the richest of his apparel, and presented himself before the King. Having kissed the ground before him, and offered up a prayer for the continuance of his power and happiness, and greeted him in the best manner he was able, he informed him who he was, and said, O King, I have heard of the disease which hath attacked thy person, and that many of the physicians are unacquainted with the means of removing it; and I will cure thee without giving thee to drink any potion, or anointing thee with ointment. When King Yunan heard his words, he wondered, and said to him, How wilt thou do this? By Allah, if thou cure me, I will enrich thee and thy children's children, and I will heap favours upon thee, and whatever thou shalt desire shall be thine, and thou shalt be my companion and my friend.—He then bestowed upon him a robe of honour, and other presents, and said to him, Wilt thou cure me of this disease without potion or ointment? He answered, Yes; I will cure thee without any discomfort to thy person. And the King was extremely astonished, and said, O Sage, at what time, and on what day, shall that which thou hast proposed to me be done? Haste it, O my Son.—He answered, I hear and obey.

* The Prophet Mohammad, who said "the sun never riseth until it hath saluted me."

He then went out from the presence of the King, and hired a house, in which he deposited his books, and medicines, and drugs. Having done this, he selected certain of his medicines and drugs, and made a goff-stick, with a hollow handle, into which he introduced them ; after which he made a ball for it, skilfully adapted ; and on the following day, after he had finished these, he went again to the King, and kissed the ground before him, and directed him to repair to the horse-course, and to play with the ball and goff-stick. The King, attended by his Emirs and Chamberlains and Wezirs, went thither, and, as soon as he arrived there, the sage Duban presented himself before him, and handed to him the goff-stick, saying, Take this goff-stick, and grasp it thus, and ride along the horse-course, and strike the ball with it with all thy force, until the palm of thy hand and thy whole body become moist with perspiration, when the medicine will penetrate into thy hand, and pervade thy whole body ; and when thou hast done this, and the medicine remains in thee, return to thy palace, and enter the bath, and wash thyself, and sleep : then shalt thou find thyself cured : and peace be on thee. So King Yurian took the goff-stick from the sage, and grasped it in his hand, and mounted his horse ; and the ball was thrown before him, and he urged his horse after it until he overtook it, when he struck it with all his force ; and when he had continued this exercise as long as was necessary, and bathed and slept, he looked upon his skin, and not a vestige of the leprosy remained : it was clear as white silver. Upon this he rejoiced exceedingly ; his heart was dilated, and he was full of happiness.

On the following morning he entered the council-chamber, and sat upon his throne ; and the Chamberlains and great officers of his court came before him. The sage Duban also presented himself ; and when the King saw him, he rose to him in haste, and seated him by his side. Services of food were then spread before them, and the sage ate with the King, and remained as his guest all the day ; and when the night approached, the King gave him two thousand pieces of gold, besides dresses of honour and other presents, and mounted him on his own horse, and so the sage returned to

his house. And the King was astonished at his skill ; saying, This man hath cured me by an external process, without anointing me with ointment : by Allah, this is consummate science ; and it is incumbent on me to bestow favours and honours upon him, and to make him my companion and familiar friend as long as I live. He passed the night happy and joyful on account of his recovery, and when he arose, he went forth again, and sat upon his throne ; the officers of his court standing before him, and the Emirs and Wezirs sitting on his right hand and on his left ; and he called for the sage Duban, who came, and kissed the ground before him ; and the King rose, and seated him by his side, and ate with him, and greeted him with compliments : he bestowed upon him again a robe of honour and other presents, and, after conversing with him till the approach of night, gave orders that five other robes of honour should be given to him, and a thousand pieces of gold ; and the sage departed, and returned to his house.

Again, when the next morning came, the King went as usual to his council-chamber, and the Emirs and Wezirs and Chamberlains surrounded him. Now there was, among his Wezirs, one of ill aspect, and of evil star ; sordid, avaricious, and of an envious and malicious disposition ; and when he saw that the King had made the sage Duban his friend, and bestowed upon him these favours, he envied him this distinction, and meditated evil against him ; agreeably with the adage which saith, There is no one void of envy ;—and another, which saith, Tyranny lurketh in the soul : power manifesteth it, and weakness concealeth it. So he approached the King, and kissed the ground before him, and said, O King of the age, thou art he whose goodness extendeth to all men, and I have an important piece of advice to give thee : if I were to conceal it from thee, I should be a base-born wretch : therefore, if thou order me to impart it, I will do so. The King, disturbed by these words of the Wezir, said, What is thy advice ? He answered, O glorious King, it hath been said, by the ancients, He who looketh not to results, fortune will not attend him :—now I have seen the King in a way that is not right ; since he hath bestowed favours upon his enemy, and upon him who desireth the

downfall of his dominion : he hath treated him with kindness, and honoured him with the highest honours, and admitted him to the closest intimacy : I therefore fear, for the King, the consequence of this conduct.—At this the King was troubled, and his countenance changed ; and he said, Who is he whom thou regardest as mine enemy, and to whom I shew kindness ? He replied, O King, if thou hast been asleep, awake ! I allude to the sage Duban.—The King said, He is my intimate companion, and the dearest of men in my estimation ; for he restored me by a thing that I merely held in my hand, and cured me of my disease which the physicians were unable to remove, and there is not now to be found one like to him in the whole world, from west to east. Wherefore, then, dost thou utter these words against him ? I will, from this day, appoint him a regular salary and maintenance, and give him every month a thousand pieces of gold ; and if I gave him a share of my kingdom it were but a small thing to do unto him. I do not think that thou hast said this from any other motive than that of envy. If I did what thou desirest, I should repent after it, as the man repented who killed his parrot.¹³

THE STORY OF THE HUSBAND AND THE PARROT

There was a certain merchant, of an excessively jealous disposition, having a wife endowed with perfect beauty, who had prevented him from leaving his home ; but an event happened which obliged him to make a journey ; and when he found his doing so to be indispensable, he went to the market in which birds were sold, and bought a parrot, which he placed in his house to act as a spy, that, on his return, she might inform him of what passed during his absence ; for this parrot was cunning and intelligent, and remembered whatever she heard. So, when he had made his journey, and accomplished his business, he returned, and caused the parrot to be brought to him, and asked her respecting the conduct of his wife. She answered, Thy wife has a lover,

who visited her every night during thy absence:—and when the man heard this, he fell into a violent rage, and went to his wife, and gave her a severe beating.

The woman imagined that one of the female slaves had informed him of what had passed between her and her paramour during his absence: she therefore called them together, and made them swear; and they all swore that they had not told their master anything of the matter; but confessed that they had heard the parrot relate to him what had passed. Having thus established, on the testimony of the slaves, the fact of the parrot's having informed her husband of her intrigue, she ordered one of these slaves to grind with a hand-mill under the cage, another to sprinkle water from above, and a third to move a mirror from side to side, during the next night on which her husband was absent; and on the following morning, when the man returned from an entertainment at which he had been present, and inquired again of the parrot what had passed that night during his absence, the bird answered, O my master, I could neither see nor hear anything, on account of the excessive darkness, and thunder, and lightning, and rain. Now this happened during summer: so he said to her, What strange words are these? It is now summer, when nothing of what thou hast described ever happens.—The parrot, however, swore by Allah the Great that what she had said was true; and that it had so happened: upon which the man, not understanding the case, nor knowing the plot, became violently enraged, and took out the bird from the cage, and threw her down upon the ground with such violence that he killed her.

But after some days, one of his female slaves informed him of the truth; yet he would not believe it, until he saw his wife's paramour going out from his house; when he drew his sword, and slew the traitor by a blow on the back of his neck: so also did he to his treacherous wife; and thus both of them went, laden with the sin which they had committed, to the fire; and the merchant discovered that the parrot had informed him truly of what she had seen; and he mourned grievously for her loss.

When the Wezir heard these words of King Yunan, he

said, O King of great dignity, what hath this crafty sage—this man from whom nought but mischief proceedeth—done unto me, that I should be his enemy, and speak evil of him, and plot with thee to destroy him? I have informed thee respecting him in compassion for thee, and in fear of his despoiling thee of thy happiness; and if my words be not true, destroy me, as the Wezir of Es-Sindibad was destroyed.—The King asked, How was that? And the Wezir thus answered:—

THE STORY OF THE ENVIOUS WEZIR AND THE PRINCE AND THE GHULEH

The King above mentioned had a son who was ardently fond of the chase; and he had a Wezir whom he charged to be always with this son wherever he went. One day the son went forth to hunt, and his father's Wezir was with him; and as they rode together, they saw a great wild beast; upon which the Wezir exclaimed to the Prince, Away after this wild beast! The King's son pursued it until he was out of the sight of his attendants, and the beast also escaped from before his eyes in the desert; and while the Prince wandered in perplexity, not knowing whither to direct his course, he met in his way a damsels, who was weeping. He said to her, Who art thou?—and she answered, I am a daughter of one of the kings of India; I was in the desert, and slumber overtook me, and I fell from my horse in a state of insensibility, and being thus separated from my attendants, I lost my way. The Prince, on hearing this, pitied her forlorn state, and placed her behind him on his horse; and as they proceeded, they passed by a ruin,¹⁴ and the damsels said to him, O my master, I would alight here for a little while. The Prince therefore lifted her from his horse at this ruin; but she delayed so long to return, that he wondered wherefore she had loitered so, and entering after her, without her knowledge, perceived that she was a Ghuleh,* and heard her say, My children, I have brought you

* A female Ghul, that eats men.

to-day a fat young man :—on which they exclaimed, Bring him in to us, O mother ! that we may fill our stomachs with his flesh. When the Prince heard their words, he felt assured of destruction ; the muscles of his sides quivered, and fear overcame him, and he retreated. The Ghuleh then came forth, and, seeing that he appeared alarmed and fearful, and that he was trembling, said to him, Wherefore dost thou fear ? He answered, I have an enemy of whom I am in fear. The Ghuleh said, Thou assertest thyself to be the son of the King. He replied, Yes.—Then, said she, wherefore dost thou not give some money to thine enemy, and so conciliate him ? He answered, He will not be appeased with money, nor with anything but life ; and therefore do I fear him : I am an injured man. She then said to him, If thou be an injured man, as thou affirmest, beg aid of God against thine oppressor, and He will avert from thee his mischievous design, and that of every other person whom thou fearest. Upon this, therefore, the Prince raised his head towards heaven, and said, O Thou who answerest the distressed when he prayeth to Thee, and dispellest evil, assist me, and cause mine enemy to depart from me ; for Thou art able to do whatsoever Thou wilt !—and the Ghuleh no sooner heard his prayer, than she departed from him. The Prince then returned to his father, and informed him of the conduct of the Wezir ; upon which the King gave orders that the minister should be put to death.—

And thou, O King, continued the Wezir of King Yunan, if thou trust in this sage, he will kill thee in the foulest manner. If thou continue to bestow favours upon him, and to make him thine intimate companion, he will plot thy destruction. Dost thou not see that he hath cured thee of the disease by external means, by a thing that thou heldst in thy hand ? Therefore thou art not secure against his killing thee by a thing that thou shalt hold in the same manner.—King Yunan answered, Thou hast spoken truth : the case is as thou hast said, O faithful Wezir : it is probable that this sage came as a spy to accomplish my death ; and if he cured me by a thing I held in my hand, he may destroy

me by a thing that I may smell : what then, O Wezir, shall be done respecting him ? The Wezir answered, Send to him immediately, and desire him to come hither ; and when he is come, strike off his head, and so shalt thou avert from thee his evil design, and be secure from him. Betray him before he betray thee.—The King said, Thou hast spoken right.

Immediately, therefore, he sent for the sage, who came, full of joy, not knowing what the Compassionate had decreed against him, and addressed the King with these words of the poet :—¹⁵

If I fail any day to render thee due thanks, tell me for whom I have composed my verse and prose.

Thou hast loaded me with favours unsolicited, bestowed without delay on thy part, or excuse.

How then should I abstain from praising thee as thou deservest, and lauding thee both with my heart and voice ?

Nay, I will thank thee for thy benefits conferred upon me : they are light upon my tongue, though weighty to my back.

Knowest thou, said the King, wherefore I have summoned thee ? The sage answered, None knoweth what is secret but God, whose name be exalted ! Then said the King, I have summoned thee that I may take away thy life. The sage, in the utmost astonishment at this announcement, said, O King, wherefore wouldest thou kill me, and what offence hath been committed by me ? The King answered, It hath been told me that thou art a spy, and that thou hast come hither to kill me : but I will prevent thee by killing thee first :—and so saying, he called out to the executioner, Strike off the head of this traitor, and relieve me from his wickedness.—Spare me, said the sage, and so may God spare thee ; and destroy me not, lest God destroy thee.—And he repeated these words several times, like as I did, O 'Efrit ; but thou wouldest not let me go, desiring to destroy me.

King Yunan then said to the sage Duban, I shall not be secure unless I kill thee ; for thou curedst me by a thing that I held in my hand, and I have no security against thy killing me by a thing that I may smell, or by some other means.—O King, said the sage, is this my recompense from thee ? Dost thou return evil for good ?—The King answered, Thou must be slain without delay. When the sage, therefore,

was convinced that the King intended to put him to death, and that his fate was inevitable, he lamented the benefit that he had done to the undeserving. The executioner then advanced, and bandaged his eyes, and, having drawn his sword, said, Give permission. Upon this the sage wept, and said again, Spare me, and so may God spare thee ; and destroy me not, lest God destroy thee ! Wouldst thou return me the recompense of the crocodile ?—What, said the King, is the story of the crocodile ? The sage answered, I cannot relate it while in this condition ; but I conjure thee by Allah to spare me, and so may He spare thee. And he wept bitterly. Then one of the chief officers of the King arose, and said, O King, give up to me the blood of this sage ; for we have not seen him commit any offence against thee ; nor have we seen him do aught but cure thee of thy disease, which wearied the other physicians and sages. The King answered, Ye know not the reason wherefore I would kill the sage : it is this, that if I suffered him to live, I should myself inevitably perish ; for he who cured me of the disease under which I suffered by a thing that I held in my hand, may kill me by a thing that I may smell ; and I fear that he would do so, and would receive an appointment on account of it ; seeing that it is probable he is a spy who hath come hither to kill me ; I must therefore kill him, and then shall I feel myself safe.—The sage then said again, Spare me, and so may God spare thee ; and destroy me not, lest God destroy thee.

But he now felt certain, O'Efrit, that the King would put him to death, and that there was no escape for him ; so he said, O King, if my death is indispensable, grant me some respite, that I may return to my house, and acquit myself of my duties, and give directions to my family and neighbours to bury me, and dispose of my medical books ; and among my books is one of most especial value, which I offer as a present to thee, that thou mayest treasure it in thy library.—And what, said the King, is this book ? He answered, It contains things not to be enumerated ; and the smallest of the secret virtues that it possesses is this ; that, when thou hast cut off my head, if thou open this book, and count three leaves, and then read three lines on the page to the left,

the head will speak to thee, and answer whatever thou shalt ask. At this the King was excessively astonished, and shook with delight, and said to him, O Sage, when I have cut off thy head will it speak? He answered, Yes, O King; and this is a wonderful thing.

The King then sent him in the custody of guards; and the sage descended to his house, and settled all his affairs on that day; and on the following day he went up to the court; and the Emirs and Wezirs, and Chamberlains and Deputies, and all the great officers of the state, went thither also: and the court resembled a flower-garden. And when the sage had entered, he presented himself before the King, bearing an old book, and a small pot containing a powder: and he sat down, and said, Bring me a tray. So they brought him one; and he poured out the powder into it, and spread it. He then said, O King, take this book, and do nothing with it until thou hast cut off my head; and when thou hast done so, place it upon this tray, and order some one to press it down upon the powder; and when this is done, the blood will be stanched: then open the book. As soon as the sage had said this, the King gave orders to strike off his head; and it was done. The King then opened the book, and found that its leaves were stuck together; so he put his finger to his mouth, and moistened it with his spittle, and opened the first leaf, and the second, and the third; but the leaves were not opened without difficulty. He opened six leaves, and looked at them; but found upon them no writing. So he said, O Sage, there is nothing written in it. The head of the sage answered, Turn over more leaves. The King did so; and in a little while, the poison penetrated into his system; for the book was poisoned; and the King fell back, and cried out, The poison hath penetrated into me!—and upon this, the head of the sage Duban repeated these verses:—

They made use of their power, and used it tyrannically; and soon it became as though it never had existed.

Had they acted equitably, they had experienced equity; but they oppressed; wherefore fortune oppressed them with calamities and trials.

Then did the case itself announce to them, This is the reward of your conduct, and fortune is blameless.

And when the head of the sage Duban had uttered these words, the King immediately fell down dead.—

Now, O 'Efrit, continued the fisherman, know that if King Yunan had spared the sage Duban, God had spared him ; but he refused, and desired his destruction ; therefore God destroyed him : and thou, O 'Efrit, if thou hadst spared me, God had spared thee, and I had spared thee ; but thou desiredst my death ; therefore will I put thee to death imprisoned in this bottle, and will throw thee here into the sea. The Marid, upon this, cried out, and said, I conjure thee by Allah, O fisherman, that thou do it not : spare me in generosity, and be not angry with me for what I did ; but if I have done evil, do thou good, according to the proverb,— O thou benefactor of him who hath done evil, the action that he hath done is sufficient for him :—do not therefore as Umiameh did to 'Atikeh.—And what, said the fisherman, was their case ? The 'Efrit answered, This is not a time for telling stories, when I am in this prison ; but when thou liberatest me, I will relate to thee their case. The fisherman said, Thou must be thrown into the sea, and there shall be no way of escape for thee from it ; for I endeavoured to propitiate thee, and humbled myself before thee, yet thou wouldest nothing but my destruction, though I had committed no offence to deserve it, and had done no evil to thee whatever, but only good, delivering thee from thy confinement ; and when thou didst thus unto me, I perceived that thou wast radically corrupt : and I would have thee know, that my motive for throwing thee into this sea, is that I may acquaint with thy story every one that shall take thee out, and caution him against thee, that he may cast thee in again : thus shalt thou remain in this sea to the end of time, and experience varieties of torment.—The 'Efrit then said, Liberate me, for this is an opportunity for thee to display humanity ; and I vow to thee that I will never do thee harm ; but, on the contrary, will do thee a service that shall enrich thee for ever.

Upon this the fisherman accepted his covenant that he would not hurt him, but that he would do him good ; and

when he had bound him by oaths and vows, and made him swear by the Most Great Name of God, he opened to him; and the smoke ascended until it had all come forth, and then collected together, and became, as before, an 'Efrit of hideous form. The 'Efrit then kicked the bottle into the sea. When the fisherman saw him do this, he made sure of destruction, and said, This is no sign of good:—but afterwards he fortified his heart, and said, O 'Efrit, God, whose name be exalted, hath said, Perform the covenant, for the covenant shall be inquired into: *—and thou hast covenanted with me, and sworn that thou wilt not act treacherously towards me; therefore, if thou so act, God will recompense thee; for He is jealous; He respiteth, but sufferereth not to escape; and remember that I said to thee as said the sage Duban to King Yunan, Spare me, and so may God spare thee.

The 'Efrit laughed, and, walking on before him, said, O fisherman, follow me. The fisherman did so, not believing in his escape, until they had quitted the neighbourhood of the city, and ascended a mountain, and descended into a wide desert tract, in the midst of which was a lake of water. Here the 'Efrit stopped, and ordered the fisherman to cast his net and take some fish; and the fisherman, looking into the lake, saw in it fish of different colours, white and red and blue and yellow; at which he was astonished; and he cast his net, and drew it in, and found in it four fish, each fish of a different colour from the others, at the sight of which he rejoiced. The 'Efrit then said to him, Take them to the Sultan, and present them to him, and he will give thee what will enrich thee; and for the sake of God accept my excuse, for, at present, I know no other way of rewarding thee, having been in the sea a thousand and eight hundred years, and not seen the surface of the earth until now: but take not fish from the lake more than once each day: and now I commend thee to the care of God.—Having thus said, he struck the earth with his feet, and it clove asunder, and swallowed him.

The fisherman then went back to the city, wondering at all that had befallen him with the 'Efrit, and carried the fish

* Kur'an, xvii. 36.

to his house ; and he took an earthen bowl, and, having filled it with water, put the fish into it ; and they struggled in the water : and when he had done this, he placed the bowl upon his head, and repaired to the King's palace, as the 'Efrit had commanded him, and, going up unto the King, presented to him the fish ; and the King was excessively astonished at them, for he had never seen any like them in the course of his life ; and he said, Give these fish to the slave cook-maid. This maid had been sent as a present to him by the King of the Greeks, three days before ; and he had not yet tried her skill. The Wezir, therefore, ordered her to fry the fish, and said to her, O maid, the King saith unto thee, I have not reserved my tear but for the time of my difficulty :—to-day, then, gratify us by a specimen of thy excellent cookery, for a person hath brought these fish as a present to the Sultan. After having thus charged her, the Wezir returned, and the King ordered him to give the fisherman four hundred pieces of gold : so the Wezir gave them to him ; and he took them in his lap, and returned to his home and his wife, joyful and happy, and bought what was needful for his family.

Such were the events that befell the fisherman : now we must relate what happened to the maid.—She took the fish, and cleaned them, and arranged them in the frying-pan, and left them until one side was cooked, when she turned them upon the other side ; and lo, the wall of the kitchen clove asunder, and there came forth from it a damsel of tall stature, smooth-cheeked, of perfect form, with eyes adorned with kohl, beautiful in countenance, and with heavy, swelling hips ; wearing a kufiyeh interwoven with blue silk ; with rings in her ears, and bracelets on her wrists, and rings set with precious jewels on her fingers ; and in her hand was a rod of Indian cane : and she dipped the end of the rod in the frying-pan, and said, O fish, are ye remaining faithful to your covenant ? At the sight of this, the cook-maid fainted. The damsel then repeated the same words a second and a third time ; after which the fish raised their heads from the frying-pan, and answered, Yes, yes. They then repeated the following verse :—

If thou return, we return ; and if thou come, we come ; and if thou forsake, we verily do the same.

And upon this the damsel overturned the frying-pan, and departed by the way she had entered, and the wall of the kitchen closed up again. The cook-maid then arose, and beheld the four fish burnt like charcoal ; and she exclaimed, In his first encounter his staff broke !—and as she sat reproaching herself, she beheld the Wezir standing at her head ; and he said to her, Bring the fish to the Sultan :—and she wept, and informed him of what had happened.

The Wezir was astonished at her words, and exclaimed, This is indeed a wonderful event ;—and he sent for the fisherman, and when he was brought, he said to him, O fisherman, thou must bring to us four fish like those which thou broughtest before. The fisherman accordingly went forth to the lake, and threw his net, and when he had drawn it in he found in it four fish as before ; and he took them to the Wezir, who went with them to the maid, and said to her, Rise, and fry them in my presence, that I may witness this occurrence. The maid, therefore, prepared the fish, and put them in the frying-pan, and they had remained but a little while, when the wall clove asunder, and the damsel appeared, clad as before, and holding the rod ; and she dipped the end of the rod in the frying-pan, and said, O fish, O fish, are ye remaining faithful to your old covenant ? Upon which they raised their heads, and answered as before ; and the damsel overturned the frying-pan with the rod, and returned by the way she had entered, and the wall closed up again.

The Wezir then said, This is an event which cannot be concealed from the King :—so he went to him, and informed him of what had happened in his presence ; and the King said, I must see this with my own eyes. He sent, therefore, to the fisherman, and commanded him to bring four fish like the former ; granting him a delay of three days. And the fisherman repaired to the lake, and brought the fish thence to the King, who ordered again that four hundred pieces of gold should be given to him ; and then, turning to the Wezir, said to him, Cook the fish thyself here before me. The Wezir answered, I hear and obey. He brought the

frying-pan, and, after he had cleaned the fish, threw them into it ; and as soon as he had turned them, the wall clove asunder, and there came forth from it a negro, in size like a bull, or like one of the tribe of 'Ad,* having in his hand a branch of a green tree ; and he said, with a clear but terrifying voice, O fish, O fish, are ye remaining faithful to your old covenant ? Upon which they raised their heads, and answered as before, Yes, yes :

If thou return, we return ; and if thou come, we come ; and if thou forsake, we verily do the same.

The black then approached the frying-pan, and overturned it with the branch, and the fish became like charcoal, and he went away as he had come.

When he had thus disappeared from before their eyes, the King said, This is an event respecting which it is impossible to keep silence, and there must, undoubtedly, be some strange circumstance connected with these fish. He then ordered that the fisherman should be brought before him, and when he had come, he said to him, Whence came these fish ? The fisherman answered, From a lake between four mountains behind this mountain which is without thy city. The King said to him, How many days' journey distant ? He answered, O our lord the Sultan, a journey of half-an-hour. And the Sultan was astonished, and ordered his troops to go out immediately with him and the fisherman, who began to curse the 'Efrit. They proceeded until they had ascended the mountain, and descended into a wide desert tract which they had never before seen in their whole lives ; and the Sultan and all the troops wondered at the sight of this desert, which was between four mountains, and at the fish, which were of four colours, red and white and yellow and blue. The King paused in astonishment, and said to the troops, and to the other attendants who were with him, Hath any one of you before seen this lake in this place ? They all answered, No. Then said the King, By Allah, I will not enter my city, nor will I sit upon my throne, until I know the true history of this lake, and of its fish.

* The smallest of the ancient Arab tribe of 'Ad is said to have been sixty cubits high.

And upon this he ordered his people to encamp around these mountains ; and they did so. He then called for the Wezir, who was a well-informed, sensible, prudent, and learned man ; and when he had presented himself before him, he said to him, I desire to do a thing with which I will acquaint thee ; and it is this :—I have resolved to depart alone this night, to seek for information respecting this lake and its fish : therefore, sit thou at the door of my pavilion, and say to the Emirs and Wezirs and Chamberlains, The Sultan is sick, and hath commanded me not to allow any person to go in unto him :—and acquaint no one with my intention.

The Wezir was unable to oppose his design ; so the King disguised himself, and slung on his sword, and withdrew himself from the midst of his troops. He journeyed the whole of the night, until the morning, and proceeded until the heat became oppressive to him : he then paused to rest ; after which he again proceeded the remainder of the day and the second night until the morning, when there appeared before him, in the distance, something black, at the sight of which he rejoiced, and said, Perhaps I shall there find some person who will inform me of the history of the lake and its fish. And when he approached this black object, he found it to be a palace built of black stones, and overlaid with iron ; and one of the leaves of its door was open, and the other shut. The King was glad, and he stood at the door, and knocked gently, but heard no answer ; he knocked a second and a third time, but again heard no answer : then he knocked a fourth time, and with violence ; but no one answered. So he said, It is doubtless empty :—and he took courage, and entered from the door into the passage, and cried out, saying, O inhabitants of the palace, I am a stranger and a traveller ! have ye any provision ? And he repeated these words a second and a third time ; but heard no answer. And upon this he fortified his heart, and emboldened himself, and proceeded from the passage into the midst of the palace ; but he found no one there, and only saw that it was furnished, and that there was, in the centre of it, a fountain with four lions of red gold, which poured forth the water from their mouths, like pearls and jewels : around this were birds ; and over the top of the palace was extended a net

which prevented their flying out. At the sight of these objects he was astonished, and he was grieved that he saw no person there whom he could ask for information respecting the lake, and the fish, and the mountains, and the palace. He then sat down between the doors, reflecting upon these things ; and as he thus sat, he heard a voice of lamentation from a sorrowful heart, chanting these verses :—

O fortune, thou pitiest me not, nor releasest me ! See my heart is straitened between affliction and peril !

Will not you [O my wife] have compassion on the mighty whom love hath abased, and the wealthy who is reduced to indigence ?

We were jealous even of the zephyr which passed over you : but when the divine decree is issued, the eye becometh blind !

What resource hath the archer when, in the hour of conflict, he desireth to discharge the arrow, but findeth his bow-string broken ?

And when troubles are multiplied upon the noble-minded, where shall he find refuge from fate and from destiny ?¹⁰

When the Sultan heard this lamentation, he sprang upon his feet, and, seeking the direction whence it proceeded, found a curtain suspended before the door of a chamber ; and he raised it, and beheld behind it a young man sitting on a couch raised to the height of a cubit from the floor. He was a handsome youth, well-shaped, and of eloquent speech, with shining forehead, and rosy cheek, marked with a mole resembling ambergris. The King was rejoiced at seeing him, and saluted him ; and the young man (who remained sitting, and was clad with a vest of silk, embroidered with gold, but who exhibited traces of grief) returned his salutation, and said to him, O my master, excuse my not rising.—O youth ! said the King, inform me respecting the lake, and its fish of various colours, and respecting this palace, and the reason of thy being alone in it, and of thy lamentation. When the young man heard these words, tears trickled down his cheeks, and he wept bitterly. And the King was astonished, and said to him, What causeth thee to weep, O youth ? He answered, How can I refrain from weeping, when this is my state ?—and so saying, he stretched forth his hand, and lifted up the skirts of his clothing ; and lo, half of him, from his waist to the soles of his feet, was stone ; and from his waist to the hair of his

head, he was like other men. He then said, Know, O King, that the story of the fish is extraordinary ; if it were engraved upon the intellect, it would be a lesson to him who would be admonished :—and he related as follows :—

THE STORY OF THE YOUNG KING OF THE BLACK ISLANDS

My father was king of the city which was here situate : his name was Mahmud, and he was lord of the Black Islands, and of the four mountains. After a reign of seventy years, he died, and I succeeded to his throne ; whereupon I took as my wife the daughter of my uncle ; and she loved me excessively, so that when I absented myself from her, she would neither eat nor drink till she saw me again. She remained under my protection five years. After this, she went one day to the bath ; and I had commanded the cook to prepare the supper, and entered this palace, and slept in my usual place. I had ordered two maids to fan me ; and one of them sat at my head, and the other at my feet ; but I was restless, because my wife was not with me ; and I could not sleep. My eyes were closed, but my spirit was awake ; and I heard the maid at my head say to her at my feet, O Mes'udeh, verily our lord is unfortunate in his youth, and what a pity is it that it should be passed with our depraved, wicked mistress !—Perdition to unfaithful wives ! replied the other : but (added she) such a person as our lord, so endowed by nature, is not suited to this profligate woman, who passes every night absent from his bed.—Verily, rejoined she at my head, our lord is careless in not making any inquiry respecting her.—Wo to thee ! said the other : hath our lord any knowledge of her conduct, or doth she leave him to his choice ? Nay, on the contrary, she contriveth to defraud him by means of the cup of wine which he drinketh every night before he sleepeth, putting benj* into it ; in consequence of which he sleepeth so soundly that he knoweth not what happeneth, nor whither she goeth, nor what she doeth ; for,

* Bhang, hemp.

after she hath given him the wine to drink, she dresseth herself, and goeth out from him, and is absent until day-break, when she returneth to him, and burneth a perfume under his nose, upon which he awaketh from his sleep.

When I heard this conversation of the maids, the light became darkness before my face, and I was hardly conscious of the approach of night, when my cousin returned from the bath. The table was prepared, and we ate, and sat a while drinking our wine as usual. I then called for the wine which I was accustomed to drink before I lay down to sleep, and she handed to me the cup; but I turned away, and, pretending to drink it as I was wont to do, poured it into my bosom, and immediately lay down: upon which she said, Sleep on; I wish that thou wouldest never wake again! By Allah, I abhor thee, and abhor thy person, and my soul is weary of thy company!—She then arose, and attired herself in the most magnificent of her apparel, and having perfumed herself, and slung on a sword, opened the door of the palace, and went out. I got up immediately, and followed her until she had quitted the palace, and passed through the streets of the city, and arrived at the city-gates, when she pronounced some words that I understood not; whereupon the locks fell off, and the gates opened, and she went out, I still following her, without her knowledge. Thence she proceeded to a space among the mounds, and arrived at a strong edifice, in which was a kubbeh * constructed of mud, with a door, which she entered. I then climbed upon the roof of the kubbeh, and, looking down upon her through an aperture, saw that she was visiting a black slave, whose large lips, one of which overlapped the other, gathered up the sand from the pebbly floor, while he lay in a filthy and wet condition, upon a few stalks of sugar cane.

She kissed the ground before this slave; and he raised his head towards her, and said, Wo to thee! Wherefore hast thou remained away until this hour? The other blacks have been here drinking wine, and each of them has gone away with his mistress; and I refused to drink on thy account.—She answered, O my master, and beloved of my

* A building with a dome.

heart, knowest thou not that I am married to my cousin, and that I abhor every man who resembles him, and hate myself while I am in his company? If I did not fear to displease thee, I would reduce the city to ruins, so that the owl and the raven should cry in it, and would transport its stones beyond Mount Kaf.*—Thou liest, thou infamous woman, replied the slave, and I swear by the generosity of the blacks (and if I speak not truth, may our valour be as the valour of the whites), that if thou loiter as thou hast now done till this hour, I will no longer give thee my company, nor approach thy person, thou faithless one! Dost thou inconvenience me for the sake of thine own pleasure, thou filthy wretch, and vilest of the whites?—When I heard (continued the King) their words, and witnessed what passed between them, the world became dark before my face, and I knew not where I was.—My cousin still stood weeping, and abasing herself before him, and said, O my beloved, and treasure of my heart, there remaineth to me none but thee for whom I care, and if thou cast me off, alas for me! O my beloved! O light of mine eye!—Thus she continued to weep, and to humble herself before him, until he became pacified towards her; upon which she rejoiced, and arose, and, having disrobed herself, said to him, O my master, hast thou here anything that thy maid may eat? He answered, Uncover the dough-pan; it contains some cooked rats' bones: eat of them, and pick them; and take this earthen pot: thou wilt find in it some buzah † to drink. So she arose, and ate and drank, and washed her hands; after which she lay down by the side of the slave, upon the stalks of sugar-cane, and covered herself with his tattered clothes and rags.

When I saw her do this, I became unconscious of my existence, and, descending from the roof of the kubbeh, entered, and took the sword from the side of my cousin, with the intention of killing them both. I struck the slave upon his neck, and thought that he was killed; but the blow, which I gave with the view of severing his head, only cut the gullet and skin and flesh; and when I thought that

* The chain of mountains believed by Muslims to encircle the earth.
† Barley-beer.

I had killed him, he uttered a loud snore, upon which my cousin started up, and, as soon as I had gone, took the sword, and returned it to its scabbard, and came back to the city and to the palace, and lay down again in my bed, in which she remained until the morning.

On the following day, I observed that my cousin had cut off her hair, and put on the apparel of mourning ; and she said to me, O my cousin, blame me not for what I do ; for I have received news that my mother is dead, and that my father hath been slain in a holy war, and that one of my two brothers hath died of a poisonous sting, and the other by the fall of a house : it is natural, therefore, that I should weep and mourn. On hearing these words, I abstained from upbraiding her, and said, Do what seemeth fit to thee ; for I will not oppose thee. Accordingly, she continued mourning and weeping and wailing a whole year ; after which she said to me, I have a desire to build for myself, in thy palace, a tomb, with a kubbeh, that I may repair thither alone to mourn, and I will call it the House of Lamentations. I replied, Do what thou seest fit. So she built for herself a house for mourning, with a kubbeh in the middle of it, like the tomb of a saint ; after which she removed thither the slave, and there she lodged him. He was in a state of excessive weakness, and unable to render her any service, though he drank wine ; and from the day on which I had wounded him, he had never spoken ; yet he remained alive, because the appointed term of his life had not expired. My cousin every day visited him in this tomb early and late, to weep and mourn over him, and took to him wine to drink, and boiled meats ; and thus she continued to do, morning and evening, until the expiration of the second year, while I patiently suffered her, till, one day, I entered her apartment unawares, and found her weeping, and slapping her face, and repeating these verses :—

I have lost my existence among mankind since your absence ; for
my heart loveth none but you.

Take my body, then, in mercy, to the place where you are laid ;
and there bury me by your side :

And if, at my grave, you utter my name, the moaning of my bones
shall answer to your call.

As soon as she had finished the recitation of these verses, I said to her, holding my drawn sword in my hand, This is the language of those faithless women who renounce the ties of affinity, and regard not lawful fellowship!—and I was about to strike her with the sword, and had lifted up my arm to do so, when she rose—for she knew that it was I who had wounded the slave—and, standing before me, pronounced some words which I understood not, and said, May God, by means of my enchantment, make thee to be half of stone, and half of the substance of man!—whereupon I became as thou seest, unable to move, neither dead nor alive; and when I had been reduced to this state, she enchanted the city and its markets and fields. The inhabitants of our city were of four classes; Muslims, and Christians, and Jews, and Magians; and she transformed them into fish: the white are the Muslims; the red, the Magians; the blue, the Christians; and the yellow, the Jews. She transformed, also, the four islands into four mountains, and placed them around the lake; and from that time she has continued every day to torture me, inflicting upon me a hundred lashes with a leathern whip, until the blood flows from my wounds; after which she puts on my upper half a vest of hair-cloth, beneath these garments.—Having said thus, the young man wept, and ejaculated the following verses:—

Give me patience, O Allah, to bear what Thou decreest! I will be patient, if so I may obtain thine approval.

I am straitened, indeed, by the calamity that hath befallen me: but the Family of the favoured Prophet shall intercede for me!

Upon this, the King, looking towards the young man, said to him, O youth, thou hast increased my anxiety. And where (he added) is this woman?—The young man answered, She is in the tomb where the slave is lying, in the kubbeh; and every day, before she visits him, she strips me of my clothing, and inflicts upon me a hundred lashes with the whip, while I weep and cry out, unable to move so as to repulse her. After thus torturing me, she repairs early to the slave, with the wine and boiled meat.—By Allah, O youth, said the King, I will do thee an act of kindness for

which I shall be remembered, and a favour which historians shall record in a biography after me.

He then sat and conversed with him until the approach of night, upon which he arose, and waited till the first dawn of day, when he took off his clothes, and slung on his sword, and went to the place where the slave lay. After remarking the candles and lamps, and perfumes and ointments, he approached the slave, and with a blow of his sword slew him: he then carried him on his back, and threw him into a well which he found in the palace, and, returning to the kubbeh, clad himself with the slave's clothes, and lay down with the drawn sword by his side. Soon after, the vile enchantress went to her cousin, and, having pulled off his clothes, took the whip, and beat him, while he cried, Ah! it is enough for me to be in this state! Have pity on me then!—Didst thou shew pity to me, she exclaimed, and didst thou spare my lover?—She then put on him the hair-cloth vest and his outer garments, and repaired to the slave with a cup of wine, and a bowl of boiled meat. Entering the tomb, she wept and wailed, exclaiming, O my master, answer me! O my master, speak to me!—and poured forth her lamentation in the words of this verse:—

How long shall this aversion and harshness continue? Sufficient is the evil which my passion hath brought upon me!¹⁷

Then, weeping as before, she exclaimed again, O my master, answer me, and speak to me! Upon this the King, speaking in a low voice, and adapting his tongue to the pronunciation of the blacks, ejaculated, Ah! Ah! there is no strength nor power but in God! On hearing these words, she screamed with joy, and fell down in a swoon; and when she recovered, she exclaimed, Possibly my master is restored to health! The King, again lowering his voice, as if from weakness, replied, Thou profligate wretch, thou deservest not that I should address thee.—Wherefore? said she. He answered, Because all the day long thou tormentest thy husband, while he calleth out, and imploreh the aid of God, so that thou hast prevented my sleeping from the commencement of darkness until morning: thy husband hath not ceased to humble himself, and to imprecate vengeance upon thee, till

he hath distracted me ; and had it not been for this, I had recovered my strength : this it is which hath prevented my answering thee.—Then, with thy permission, she replied, I will liberate him from his present sufferings.—Liberate him, said the King, and give us ease.

She replied, I hear and obey ;—and immediately arose, and went out from the kubbeh to the palace, and, taking a cup, filled it with water, and pronounced certain words over it, upon which it began to boil like a cauldron. She then sprinkled some of it upon her cousin, saying, By virtue of what I have uttered, be changed from thy present state to that in which thou wast at first !—and instantly he shook, and stood upon his feet, rejoicing in his liberation, and exclaimed, I testify that there is no deity but God, and that Mohammad is God's Apostle ; God bless and save him ! She then said to him, Depart, and return not hither, or I will kill thee :—and she cried out in his face : so he departed from before her, and she returned to the kubbeh, and said, O my master, come forth to me that I may behold thee. He replied, with a weak voice, What hast thou done ? Thou hast relieved me from the branch, but hast not relieved me from the root.—O my beloved, she said, and what is the root ? He answered, The people of this city, and of the four islands : every night, at the middle hour, the fish raise their heads, and imprecate vengeance upon me and upon thee ; and this is the cause that preventeth the return of vigour to my body ; therefore, liberate them, and come, and take my hand, and raise me ; for vigour hath already in part returned to me.

On hearing these words of the King, whom she imagined to be the slave, she said to him with joy, O my master, on my head and my eye ! In the name of Allah !—and she sprang up, full of happiness, and hastened to the lake, where, taking a little of its water, she pronounced over it some unintelligible words, whereupon the fish became agitated, and raised their heads, and immediately became converted into men as before. Thus was the enchantment removed from the inhabitants of the city, and the city became repeopled, and the market-streets re-erected, and every one returned to his occupation : the mountains also became changed into

islands as they were at the first. The enchantress then returned immediately to the King, whom she still imagined to be the slave, and said to him, O my beloved, stretch forth thy honoured hand, that I may kiss it.—Approach me, said the King in a low voice. So she drew near to him; and he, having his keen-edged sword ready in his hand, thrust it into her bosom, and the point protruded from her back: he then struck her again, and clove her in twain, and went forth.

He found the young man who had been enchanted waiting his return, and congratulated him on his safety; and the young prince kissed his hand, and thanked him. The King then said to him, Wilt thou remain in thy city, or come with me to my capital?—O King of the age, said the young man, dost thou know the distance that is between thee and thy city? The King answered, Two days and a half.—O King, replied the young man, if thou hast been asleep, awake: between thee and thy city is a distance of a year's journey to him who travelleth with diligence; and thou camest in two days and a half only because the city was enchanted: but, O King, I will never quit thee for the twinkling of an eye. The King rejoiced at his words, and said, Praise be to God, who hath in his beneficence given thee to me: thou art my son; for during my whole life, I have never been blest with a son:—and they embraced each other, and rejoiced exceedingly. They then went together into the palace, where the King who had been enchanted informed the officers of his court that he was about to perform the holy pilgrimage: so they prepared for him everything that he required; and he departed with the Sultan; his heart burning with reflections upon his city, because he had been deprived of the sight of it for the space of a year.

He set forth, accompanied by fifty memluks, and provided with presents, and they continued their journey night and day for a whole year, after which they drew near to the city of the Sultan, and the Wezir and the troops, who had lost all hope of his return, came forth to meet him. The troops, approaching him, kissed the ground before him, and congratulated him on his safe return; and he entered the

city, and sat upon the throne. He then acquainted the Wezir with all that had happened to the young King; on hearing which, the Wezir congratulated the latter, also, on his safety; and when all things were restored to order, the Sultan bestowed presents upon a number of his subjects, and said to the Wezir, Bring to me the fisherman who presented to me the fish. So he sent to this fisherman, who had been the cause of the restoration of the inhabitants of the enchanted city, and brought him; and the King invested him with a dress of honour, and inquired of him respecting his circumstances, and whether he had any children. The fisherman informed him that he had a son and two daughters; and the King, on hearing this, took as his wife one of the daughters, and the young prince married the other. The King also conferred upon the son the office of treasurer. He then sent the Wezir to the city of the young prince, the capital of the Black Islands, and invested him with its sovereignty, despatching with him the fifty memlukhs who had accompanied him thence, with numerous robes of honour to all the Emirs; and the Wezir kissed his hands, and set forth on his journey; while the Sultan and the young prince remained. And as to the fisherman, he became the wealthiest of the people of his age; and his daughters continued to be the wives of the Kings until they died.

But this (added Shahrazad) is not more wonderful than what happened to the porter.

CHAPTER III

[NIGHTS 9—18]

THE STORY OF THE PORTER AND THE LADIES OF BAGHDAD, AND OF THE THREE ROYAL MENDICANTS, ETC.

THERE was a man of the city of Baghdad, who was unmarried, and he was a porter; and one day, as he sat in the market, reclining against his crate, there accosted him a female wrapped in an izar of the manufacture of El-Mosil,* composed of gold-embroidered silk, with a border of gold lace at each end, who raised her face-veil, and displayed beneath it a pair of black eyes, with lids bordered by long lashes, exhibiting a tender expression, and features of perfect beauty; and she said, with a sweet voice, Bring thy crate, and follow me.

The porter had scarcely heard her words when he took up his crate, and he followed her until she stopped at the door of a house, and knocked; whereupon there came down to her a Christian, and she gave him a piece of gold, and received for it a quantity of olives, and two large vessels of wine,¹⁸ which she placed in the crate, saying to the porter, Take it up, and follow me. The porter exclaimed, This is, indeed, a fortunate day!—and he took up the crate, and followed her. She next stopped at the shop of a fruiterer, and bought of him Syrian apples, and 'Othmani quinces, and peaches of 'Oman, and jasmine of Aleppo, and water-lilies of Damascus, and cucumbers of the Nile, and Egyptian limes, and Sultani citrons, and sweet-scented myrtle, and sprigs of the henna-tree, and chamomile, and anemones, and violets, and pomegranate-flowers, and eglantine: all these she put into the porter's crate, and said to him, Take it up. So he took it up, and followed her until she stopped at the

* "Mosul," a city long famous for its fine stuffs.

shop of a butcher, to whom she said, Cut off ten pounds of meat ;—and he cut it off for her, and she wrapped it in a leaf of a banana-tree, and put it in the crate, and said again, Take it up, O porter :—and he did so, and followed her. She next stopped at the shop of a seller of dry fruits, and took some of every kind of these, and desired the porter to take up his burden. Having obeyed, he followed her until she stopped at the shop of a confectioner, where she bought a dish, and filled it with sweets of every kind that he had,¹⁹ which she put into the crate ; whereupon the porter ventured to say, If thou hadst informed me beforehand, I had brought with me a mule to carry all these things. The lady smiled at his remark, and next stopped at the shop of a perfumer, of whom she bought ten kinds of scented waters ; rose-water, and orange-flower-water, and willow-flower-water, &c. ; together with some sugar, and a sprinkling-bottle of rose-water infused with musk, and some frankincense, and aloes-wood, and ambergris, and musk, and wax candles ; and, placing all these in the crate, she said, Take up thy crate, and follow me. He, therefore, took it up, and followed her until she came to a handsome house, before which was a spacious court. It was a lofty structure, with a door of two leaves, composed of ebony, overlaid with plates of red gold.

The young lady stopped at this door, and knocked gently ; whereupon both its leaves were opened, and the porter, looking to see who opened it, found it to be a damsel of tall stature, high-bosomed, fair and beautiful, and of elegant form, with a forehead like the bright new moon, eyes like those of gazelles, eyebrows like the new moon of Ramadan, cheeks resembling anemones, and a mouth like the seal of Suleyman : her countenance was like the full moon in its splendour, and the forms of her bosom resembled two pomegranates of equal size. When the porter beheld her, she captivated his reason, the crate nearly fell from his head, and he exclaimed, Never in my life have I seen a more fortunate day than this ! The lady-portress, standing within the door, said to the cateress and the porter, Ye are welcome :—and they entered, and proceeded to a spacious saloon, decorated with various colours, and beautifully constructed, with carved wood-work, and fountains, and benches

of different kinds, and closets with curtains hanging before them ; there was also in it, at the upper end,²⁰ a couch of alabaster inlaid with large pearls and jewels, with a mosquito-curtain of red satin suspended over it, and within this was a young lady with eyes possessing the enchantment of Babil,* and a figure like the letter Alif, with a face that put to shame the shining sun : she was like one of the brilliant planets, or rather, one of the most high-born of the maidens of Arabia. This third lady,²¹ rising from the couch, advanced with a slow and elegant gait to the middle of the saloon, where her sisters were standing, and said to them, Why stand ye still ? Lift down the burden from the head of this poor porter :—whereupon the cateress placed herself before him, and the portress behind him, and, the third lady assisting them, they lifted it down from his head. They then took out the contents of the crate, and, having put every thing in its place, gave to the porter two pieces of gold, saying to him, Depart, O porter.

The porter, however, stood looking at the ladies, and admiring their beauty and their agreeable dispositions ; for he had never seen any more handsome ; and when he observed that they had not a man among them, and gazed upon the wine, and fruits, and sweet-scented flowers, which were there, he was full of astonishment, and hesitated to go out ; upon which one of the ladies said to him, Why dost thou not go ? dost thou deem thy hire too little ? Then turning to one of her sisters, she said to her, Give him another piece of gold.—By Allah, O my mistress, exclaimed the porter, my hire is but two half-dirhems,²² and I thought not what ye have given me too little ; but my heart and mind were occupied with reflections upon you and your state, ye being alone, with no man among you, not one to amuse you with his company ; for ye know that the menareh † standeth not firmly but on four walls : now ye

* Babil, or Babel, is regarded by the Muslims as the fountain-head of the science of magic, which was, and, as most think, still is, taught there to mankind by two fallen angels, named Harut and Marut (Kur'an, ii. 96), who are there suspended by the feet in a great pit closed by a mass of rock.

† Minaret.

have not a fourth, and the pleasure of women is not complete without men : ye are three only, and have need of a fourth, who should be a man, a person of sense, discreet, acute, and a concealer of secrets.—We are maidens, they replied ; and fear to impart our secret to him who will not keep it ; for we have read, in a certain history, this verse :—

Guard thy secret from another : intrust it not : for he who intrusteth a secret hath lost it.

—By your existence, said the porter, I am a man of sense, and trustworthy : I have read various books, and perused histories : I make known what is fair, and conceal what is foul, and act in accordance with the saying of the poet :—

None keepeth a secret but a faithful person : with the best of mankind it remaineth concealed.

A secret is with me as in a house with a lock, whose key is lost, and whose door is sealed.

When the ladies heard the verses which he quoted, and the words with which he addressed them, they said to him, Thou knowest that we have expended here a considerable sum of money : hast thou then wherewith to requite us ? We will not suffer thee to remain with us unless thou contribute a sum of money ; for thou desirest to sit with us, and to be our cup-companion, and to gaze upon our beautiful faces.— If friendship is without money, said the mistress of the house, it is not equivalent to the weight of a grain :—and the portress added, If thou hast nothing, depart with nothing :— but the cateress said, O sister, let us suffer him ; for, verily, he hath not been deficient in his services for us this day : another had not been so patient with us : whatever, therefore, falls to his share of the expense, I will defray for him.—At this the porter rejoiced, and exclaimed, By Allah, I obtained my first and only pay this day from none but thee :—and the other ladies said to him, Sit down : thou art welcome.

The cateress then arose, and, having tightened her girdle, arranged the bottles, and strained the wine, and prepared the table by the pool of the fountain. She made ready all that they required, brought the wine, and sat down with her sisters ; the porter also sitting with them, thinking he was in

a dream. And when they had seated themselves, the cateress took a jar of wine, and filled the first cup, and drank it :²³ she then filled another, and handed it to one of her sisters ; and in like manner she did to her other sister ; after which she filled again, and handed the cup to the porter, who, having taken it from her hand, repeated this verse :—

I will drink the wine, and enjoy health ; for, verily, this beverage is a remedy for disease.

The wine continued to circulate among them, and the porter, taking his part in the revels, dancing and singing with them, and enjoying the fragrant odours, began to hug and kiss them, while one slapped ²⁴ him, and another pulled him, and the third beat him with sweet-scented flowers, till, at length, the wine made sport with their reason ; and they threw off all restraint, indulging their merriment with as much freedom as if no man had been present.²⁵

Thus they continued until the approach of night, when they said to the porter, Depart, and shew us the breadth of thy shoulders ;—but he replied, Verily the departure of my soul from my body were more easy to me than my departure from your company ; therefore suffer us to join the night to the day, and then each of us shall return to his own, or her own, affairs. The cateress, also, again interceded for him, saying, By my life I conjure you that ye suffer him to pass the night with us, that we may laugh at his drolleries, for he is a witty rogue. So they said to him, Thou shalt pass the night with us on this condition, that thou submit to our authority, and ask not an explanation of anything that thou shalt see. He replied, Good.—Rise then, said they, and read what is inscribed upon the door. Accordingly, he went to the door, and found the following inscription upon it in letters of gold, Speak not of that which doth not concern thee, lest thou hear that which will not please thee :— and he said, Bear witness to my promise that I will not speak of that which doth not concern me.

The cateress then rose, and prepared for them a repast ; and, after they had eaten a little, they lighted the candles and burned some aloes-wood. This done, they sat down

again to the table ; and, while they were eating and drinking, they heard a knocking at the door ; whereupon, without causing any interruption to their meal, one of them went to the door, and, on her return said, Our pleasure this night is now complete, for I have found, at the door, three foreigners * with shaven chins, and each of them is blind of the left eye : it is an extraordinary coincidence. They are strangers newly arrived, and each of them has a ridiculous appearance : if they come in, therefore, we shall be amused with laughing at them.—The lady ceased not with these words, but continued to persuade her sisters until they consented, and said, Let them enter ; but make it a condition with them that they speak not of that which doth not concern them, lest they hear that which will not please them. Upon this she rejoiced, and, having gone again to the door, brought in the three men blind of one eye and with shaven chins, and they had thin and twisted mustaches. Being mendicants, they saluted and drew back ; but the ladies rose to them, and seated them ; and when these three men looked at the porter, they saw that he was intoxicated ; and, observing him narrowly, they thought that he was one of their own class, and said, He is a mendicant like ourselves, and will amuse us by his conversation :—but the porter, hearing what they said, arose, and rolled his eyes, and exclaimed to them, Sit quiet, and abstain from impertinent remarks. Have ye not read the inscription upon the door ?—The ladies, laughing, said to each other, Between the mendicants and the porter we shall find matter for amusement. They then placed before the former some food, and they ate, and then sat to drink. The portress handed to them the wine, and, as the cup was circulating among them, the porter said to them, Brothers, have ye any tale or strange anecdote wherewith to amuse us ? The mendicants, heated by the wine, asked for musical instruments ; and the portress brought them a tambourine of the manufacture of El-Mosil, with a lute of El-Irak, and a Persian harp ; whereupon they all arose ; and one took the tambourine ; another, the lute ; and the third, the harp : and they played upon these instruments, the ladies accompanying them with loud songs ; and

[* Or perhaps Kalenderi darwishes.²⁶]

while they were thus diverting themselves, a person knocked at the door. The portress, therefore, went to see who was there; and the cause of the knocking was this.

The Khalifeh Harun Er-Rashid had gone forth this night to see and hear what news he could collect, accompanied by Ja'far his Wezir, and Mesrur his executioner. It was his custom to disguise himself in the attire of a merchant; and this night, as he went through the city, he happened to pass, with his attendants, by the house of these ladies, and, hearing the sounds of the musical instruments, he said to Ja'far, I have a desire to enter this house, and to see who is giving this concert.—They are a party who have become intoxicated, replied Ja'far, and I fear that we may experience some ill usage from them;—but the Khalifeh said, We must enter, and I would that thou devise some stratagem by which we may obtain admission to the inmates. Ja'far therefore answered, I hear and obey:—and he advanced, and knocked at the door; and when the portress came and opened the door, he said to her, My mistress, we are merchants from Tabariyeh,* and have been in Baghdad ten days; we have brought with us merchandise, and taken lodgings in a Khan; and a merchant invited us to an entertainment this night: accordingly, we went to his house, and he placed food before us, and we ate, and sat a while drinking together, after which he gave us leave to depart; and going out in the dark, and being strangers, we missed our way to the Khan: we trust, therefore, in your generosity that you will admit us to pass the night in your house; by doing which you will obtain a reward in heaven.—The portress, looking at them, and observing that they were in the garb of merchants, and that they bore an appearance of respectability, returned, and consulted her two companions; and they said to her, Admit them:—so she returned, and opened to them the door. They said to her, Shall we enter with thy permission? She answered, Come in. The Khalifeh, therefore, entered, with Ja'far and Mesrur; and when the ladies saw them, they rose to them, and served them, saying, Welcome are our guests; but we have a condition to impose upon you, that ye speak not of that which doth not

* Tiberias.

concern you, lest ye hear that which will not please you. They answered, Good :—and when they had sat down to drink, the Khalifeh looked at the three mendicants, and was surprised at observing that each of them was blind of the left eye; and he gazed upon the ladies, and was perplexed and amazed at their fairness and beauty. And when the others proceeded to drink and converse, the ladies brought wine to the Khalifeh; but he said, I am a pilgrim; —and drew back from them. Whereupon the portress spread before him an embroidered cloth, and placed upon it a China bottle, into which she poured some willow-flower-water, adding to it a lump of ice, and sweetening it with sugar, while the Khalifeh thanked her, and said within himself, To-morrow I must reward her for this kind action.

The party continued their carousal, and, when the wine took effect upon them, the mistress of the house arose, and waited upon them; and afterwards, taking the hand of the cateress, said, Arise, O my sister, that we may fulfil our debt. She replied, Good. The portress then rose, and, after she had cleared the middle of the saloon, placed the mendicants at the further end, beyond the doors; after which, the ladies called to the porter, saying, How slight is thy friendship! thou art not a stranger, but one of the family. So the porter arose, and girded himself, and said, What would ye?—to which one of the ladies answered, Stand where thou art:—and presently the cateress said to him, Assist me:—and he saw two black bitches, with chains attached to their necks, and drew them to the middle of the saloon; whereupon the mistress of the house arose from her place, and tucked up her sleeve above her wrist, and, taking a whip, said to the porter, Bring to me one of them. Accordingly, he dragged one forward by the chain. The bitch whined, and shook her head at the lady; but the latter fell to beating her upon the head, notwithstanding her howling, until her arms were tired, when she threw the whip from her hand, and pressed the bitch to her bosom, and wiped away her tears, and kissed her head; after which she said to the porter, Take her back, and bring the other; —and he brought her, and she did to her as she had done to the first. At the sight of this, the mind of the Khalifeh

was troubled, and his heart was contracted, and he winked to Ja'far that he should ask her the reason ; but he replied by a sign, Speak not.

The mistress of the house then looked towards the portress and said to her, Arise to perform what thou hast to do. She replied, Good :—and the mistress of the house seated herself upon a couch of alabaster, overlaid with gold and silver, and said to the portress and the cateress, Now perform your parts. The portress then seated herself upon a couch by her ; and the cateress, having entered a closet, brought out from it a bag of satin with green fringes, and, placing herself before the lady of the house, shook it, and took out from it a lute ; and she tuned its strings, and sang to it these verses :—

Restore to my eyelids the sleep which hath been ravished ; and inform me of my reason, whither it hath fled.

I discovered, when I took up my abode with love, that slumber had become an enemy to my eyes.

They said, We saw thee to be one of the upright ; what, then, hath seduced thee ? I answered, Seek the cause from his glance.

Verily I excuse him for the shedding of my blood, admitting that I urged him to the deed by vexation.

He cast his sun-like image upon the mirror of my mind, and its reflection kindled a flame in my vitals.²⁷

When the portress²⁸ had heard this song, she exclaimed, Allah approve thee !—and she rent her clothes, and fell upon the floor in a swoon ; and when her bosom was thus uncovered, the Khalifeh saw upon her the marks of beating, as if from mikra'ahs* and whips ; at which he was greatly surprised. The cateress immediately arose, sprinkled water upon her face, and brought her another dress, which she put on. The Khalifeh then said to Ja'far, Seest thou not this woman, and the marks of beating upon her ? I cannot keep silence respecting this affair, nor be at rest, until I know the truth of the history of this damsel, and that of these two bitches. But Ja'far replied, O our lord, they have made a covenant with us that we shall not speak excepting of that which concerneth us, lest we hear that which will not please us.—The cateress then took the lute again, and, placing it

* Palm sticks.

against her bosom, touched the chords with the ends of her fingers, and thus sang to it :—

If of love we complain, what shall we say ? Or consuming through desire, how can we escape ?

Or if we send a messenger to interpret for us, he cannot convey the lover's complaint.

Or if we would be patient, short were our existence after the loss of those we love.

Nought remaineth to us but grief and mourning, and tears streaming down our cheeks.

O you who are absent from my sight, but constantly dwelling within my heart !

Have you kept your faith to an impassioned lover, who, while time endureth, will never change ?

Or, in absence, have you forgotten that lover who, on your account, is wasting away ?

When the day of judgment shall bring us together, I will beg of our Lord a protractive trial.

On hearing these verses of the cateress, the portress again rent her clothes, and cried out, and fell upon the floor in a swoon ; and the cateress, as before, put on her another dress, after she had sprinkled some water upon her face.²⁰

The mendicants, when they witnessed this scene, said, Would that we had never entered this house, but rather had passed the night upon the [rubbish-]mounds ; for our night hath been rendered foul by an event that breaketh the back ! The Khalifeh, looking towards them, then said, Wherefore is it so with you ? They answered, Our hearts are troubled by this occurrence.—Are ye not, he asked, of this house ?—No, they answered ; nor did we imagine that this house belonged to any but the man who is sitting with you :—upon which the porter said, Verily, I have never seen this place before this night ; and I would that I had passed the night upon the mounds rather than here. They then observed, one to another, We are seven men, and they are but three women ; we will, therefore, ask them of their history ; and if they answer us not willingly they shall do it in spite of themselves :—and they all agreed to this, excepting Ja'far, who said, This is not a right determination ; leave them to themselves, for we are their guests, and they made a covenant with us which we should fulfil : there remaineth but little of the night, and each of us shall soon go his way. Then,

winking to the Khalifeh, he said, There remaineth but an hour; and to-morrow we will bring them before thee, and thou shalt ask them their story. But the Khalifeh refused to do so, and said, I have not patience to wait so long for their history.—Words followed words, and at last they said, Who shall put the question to them?—and one answered, The porter.

The ladies then said to them, O people, of what are ye talking?—whereupon the porter approached the mistress of the house, and said to her, O my mistress, I ask thee, and conjure thee by Allah, to tell us the story of the two bitches, and for what reason thou didst beat them, and then didst weep, and kiss them, and that thou acquaint us with the cause of thy sister's having been beaten with mikra'ahs: that is our question, and peace be on you.—Is this true that he saith of you? inquired the lady, of the other men; and they all answered, Yes,—excepting Ja'far, who was silent. When the lady heard their answer, she said, Verily, O our guests, ye have wronged us excessively; for we made a covenant with you beforehand, that he who should speak of that which concerned him not should hear that which would not please him. Is it not enough that we have admitted you into our house, and fed you with our provisions? But it is not so much your fault as the fault of her who introduced you to us.—She then tucked up her sleeve above her wrist, and struck the floor three times, saying, Come ye quickly!—and immediately the door of a closet opened, and there came forth from it seven black slaves, each having in his hand a drawn sword. The lady said to them, Tie behind them the hands of these men of many words, and bind each of them to another:—and they did so, and said, O virtuous lady, dost thou permit us to strike off their heads? She answered, Give them a short respite, until I shall have inquired of them their histories, before ye behead them.—By Allah, O my mistress, exclaimed the porter, kill me not for the offence of others: for they have all transgressed and committed an offence, excepting me. Verily our night had been pleasant if we had been preserved from these mendicants, whose presence is enough to convert a well-peopled city into a heap of ruins!—He then repeated this couplet:—

How good is it to pardon one able to resist ! and how much more so, one who is helpless !

For the sake of the friendship that subsisted between us, destroy not one for the crime of another !

On hearing these words of the porter, the lady laughed after her anger. Then approaching the men, she said, Acquaint me with your histories, for there remaineth of your lives no more than an hour. Were ye not persons of honourable and high condition, or governors, I would hasten your recompence.—The Khalifeh said to Ja'far, Wo to thee, O Ja'far ! make known to her who we are ; otherwise she will kill us. —It were what we deserve, replied he.—Jesting, said the Khalifeh, is not befitting in a time for seriousness : each has its proper occasion.—The lady then approached the mendicants, and said to them, Are ye brothers ? They answered, No, indeed ; we are only poor foreigners.³⁰ She said then to one of them, Wast thou born blind of one eye ?—No, verily, he answered ; but a wonderful event happened to me when my eye was destroyed, and the story of it, if engraved on the understanding, would serve as a lesson to him who would be admonished. She asked the second and the third also ; and they answered her as the first ; adding, Each of us is from a different country, and our history is wonderful and extraordinary. The lady then looked towards them and said, Each of you shall relate his story, and the cause of his coming to our abode, and then stroke his head, and go his way.

The first who advanced was the porter, who said, O my mistress, I am a porter ; and this cateress loaded me, and brought me hither, and what hath happened to me here in your company ye know. This is my story ; and peace be on you.—Stroke thy head, then, said she, and go :—but he replied, By Allah, I will not go until I shall have heard the story of my companions.—The first mendicant then advanced, and related as follows :—

THE STORY OF THE FIRST ROYAL MENDICANT

Know, O my mistress, that the cause of my having shaved my beard, and of the loss of my eye was this:—My father was a King, and he had a brother who was also a King, and who resided in another capital. It happened that my mother gave birth to me on the same day on which the son of my uncle was born; and years and days passed away until we attained to manhood. Now, it was my custom, some years, to visit my uncle, and to remain with him several months; and on one of these occasions my cousin paid me great honour; he slaughtered sheep for me, and strained the wine for me, and we sat down to drink; and when the wine had affected us, he said to me, O son of my uncle, I have need of thine assistance in an affair of interest to me, and I beg that thou wilt not oppose me in that which I desire to do. I replied, I am altogether at thy service:—and he made me swear to him by great oaths, and, rising immediately, absented himself for a little while, and then returned, followed by a woman decked with ornaments, and perfumed, and wearing a dress of extraordinary value. He looked towards me, while the woman stood behind him, and said, Take this woman, and go before me to the burial-ground which is in such a place:—and he described it to me, and I knew it. He then added, Enter the burial-ground, and there wait for me.

I could not oppose him, nor refuse to comply with his request, on account of the oaths which I had sworn to him; so I took the woman, and went with her to the burial-ground; and when we had sat there a short time, my cousin came, bearing a basin of water, and a bag containing some plaster, and a small adze. Going to a tomb in the midst of the burial-ground, he took the adze, and disunited the stones, which he placed on one side; he then dug up the earth with the adze, and uncovered a flat stone, of the size of a small door, under which there appeared a vaulted staircase.

Having done this, he made a sign to the woman, and said to her, Do according to thy choice:—whereupon she descended the stairs. He then looked towards me, and said, O son of my uncle, complete thy kindness when I have descended into this place, by replacing the trap-door and the earth above it as they were before: then, this plaster which is in the bag, and this water which is in the basin, do thou knead together, and plaster the stones of the tomb as they were, so that no man may know it, and say, This hath been lately opened, but its interior is old:—for, during the space of a whole year I have been preparing this, and no one knew it but God: this is what I would have thee do. He then said to me, May God never deprive thy friends of thy presence, O son of my uncle!—and, having uttered these words, he descended the stairs.

When he had disappeared from before my eyes, I replaced the trap-door, and busied myself with doing as he had ordered me, until the tomb was restored to the state in which it was at first; after which I returned to the palace of my uncle, who was then absent on a hunting excursion. I slept that night, and when the morning came, I reflected upon what had occurred between me and my cousin, and repented of what I had done for him, when repentance was of no avail. I then went out to the burial-ground, and searched for the tomb; but could not discover it. I ceased not in my search until the approach of night; and, not finding the way to it, returned again to the palace; and I neither ate nor drank: my heart was troubled respecting my cousin, since I knew not what had become of him; and I fell into excessive grief. I passed the night sorrowful until the morning, and went again to the burial-ground, reflecting upon the action of my cousin, and repenting of my compliance with his request; and I searched among all the tombs; but discovered not that for which I looked. Thus I persevered in my search seven days without success.

My trouble continued and increased until I was almost mad; and I found no relief but in departing, and returning to my father; but on my arrival at his capital, a party at the city-gate sprang upon me and bound me. I was struck with the utmost astonishment, considering that I was the

son of the Sultan of the city, and that these were the servants of my father and of myself : excessive fear of them overcame me, and I said within myself, What hath happened to my father ? I asked, of those who had bound me, the cause of this conduct ; but they returned me no answer, till after a while, when one of them, who had been my servant, said to me, Fortune hath betrayed thy father, the troops have been false to him, and the Wezir hath killed him ; and we were lying in wait to take thee.—They took me, and I was as one dead, by reason of this news which I had heard respecting my father ; and I stood before the Wezir who had killed my father.

Now, there was an old enmity subsisting between me and him ; and the cause of it was this :—I was fond of shooting with the crossbow ; and it happened, one day, that as I was standing on the roof of my palace, a bird alighted on the roof of the palace of the Wezir, who was standing there at the time, and I aimed at the bird ; but the bullet missed it, and struck the eye of the Wezir, and knocked it out, in accordance with the appointment of fate and destiny, as the poet hath said :—

We trod the steps appointed for us : and the man whose steps are appointed must tread them.

He whose death is decreed to take place in one land will not die in any land but that.

When I had thus put out the eye of the Wezir, he could say nothing, because my father was King of the city. This was the cause of the enmity between him and me : and when I stood before him, with my hands bound behind me, he gave the order to strike off my head. I said to him, Wouldst thou kill me for no offence ?—What offence, he exclaimed, could be greater than this ?—and he pointed to the place of the eye which was put out. I did that, said I, unintentionally. He replied, If thou didst it unintentionally, I will do the same to thee purposely :—and immediately he said, Bring him forward to me :—and, when they had done so, he thrust his finger into my left eye, and pulled it out. Thus I became deprived of one eye, as ye see me. He then bound me firmly, and placed me in a chest, and said to the

executioner, Take this fellow, and draw thy sword, and convey him without the city ; then put him to death, and let the wild beasts devour him.

Accordingly, he went forth with me from the city, and, having taken me out from the chest, bound hand and foot, was about to bandage my eye, and kill me ; whereupon I wept, and exclaimed,—

How many brothers have I taken as armour ! and such they were ;
but to guard my enemies.

I thought they would be as piercing arrows : and such they were ;
but to enter my heart !

The executioner, who had served my father in the same capacity, and to whom I had shewn kindnesses, said, on hearing these verses, O my master, what can I do, being a slave under command ?—but presently he added, Depart with thy life, and return not to this country, lest thou perish, and cause me to perish with thee. The poet saith,—

Flee with thy life if thou fearest oppression, and leave the house to tell its builder's fate.

Thou wilt find, for the land that thou quittest, another : but no soul wilt thou find to replace thine own.

As soon as he had thus said, I kissed his hands, and believed not in my safety until I had fled from his presence. The loss of my eye appeared light to me when I considered my escape from death ; and I journeyed to my uncle's capital, and, presenting myself before him, informed him of what had befallen my father, and of the manner in which I had lost my eye : upon which he wept bitterly, and said, Thou hast added to my trouble and my grief ; for thy cousin hath been lost for some days, and I know not what hath happened to him, nor can any one give me information respecting him. Then he wept again, until he became insensible ; and when he recovered, he said, O my son, the loss of thine eye is better than the loss of thy life.

Upon this I could no longer keep silence respecting his son, my cousin ; so I informed him of all that happened to him ; and on hearing this news he rejoiced exceedingly, and said, Shew me the tomb.—By Allah, O my uncle, I replied, I know not where it is ; for I went afterwards several times

to search for it, and could not recognise its place. We, however, went together to the burial-ground, and, looking to the right and left, I discovered it ; and both I and my uncle rejoiced. I then entered the tomb with him, and when we had removed the earth, and lifted up the trap-door, we descended fifty steps, and, arriving at the bottom of the stairs, there issued forth upon us a smoke which blinded our eyes ; whereupon my uncle pronounced those words which relieve from fear him who uttereth them,—There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great !—After this, we proceeded, and found ourselves in a saloon, filled with flour and grain, and various eatables ; and we saw there a curtain suspended over a couch, upon which my uncle looked, and found there his son and the woman who had descended with him, lying side by side, and converted into black charcoal, as if they had been thrown into a pit of fire. And when he beheld this spectacle, he spat in his son's face, and exclaimed, This is what thou deservest, O thou wretch ! This is the punishment of the present world, and there remaineth the punishment of the other world, which will be more severe and lasting !—and he struck him with his shoes. Astonished at this action, and grieved for my cousin, seeing him and the damsels thus converted into charcoal, I said, By Allah, O my uncle, moderate the trouble of thy heart, for my mind is perplexed by that which hath happened to thy son, and by thinking how it hath come to pass that he and the damsels are converted into black charcoal. Dost thou not deem it enough for him to be in this state, that thou beatest him with thy shoes ?

O son of my brother, he replied, this my son was, from his early years, inflamed with love for his [foster-]sister, and I used to forbid him from entertaining this passion for her, and to say within myself, They are now children, but when they grow older a base act will be committed by them :—and, indeed, I heard that such had been the case, but I believed it not. I, however, reprimanded him severely, and said to him, Beware of so foul an action, which none before thee hath committed, nor will any commit after thee : otherwise we shall suffer disgrace and disparagement among the Kings until we die, and our history will spread abroad

with the caravans: have a care for thyself that such an action proceed not from thee; for I should be incensed against thee, and kill thee. I then separated him from her, and her from him: but the vile woman loved him excessively; the Devil got possession of them both; and when my son saw that I had separated him, he secretly made this place beneath the earth, and, having conveyed hither the provisions which thou seest, took advantage of my inadvertence when I had gone out to hunt, and came hither: but the Truth (whose perfection be extolled, and whose name be exalted!) was jealously vigilant over them, and consumed them by fire; and the punishment of the world to come will be more severe and lasting.—He then wept, and I wept with him; and he said to me, Thou art my son in his stead.—I remained a while reflecting upon the world and its vicissitudes, upon the murder of my father by the Wezir, and his usurping his throne, and the loss of my eye, and the strange events which had happened to my cousin, and I wept again.

We then ascended, and, having replaced the trap-door and the earth above it, and restored the tomb to its former state, returned to our abode; but scarcely had we seated ourselves when we heard the sounds of drums and trumpets, warriors galloped about, and the air was filled with dust raised by the horses' hoofs. Our minds were perplexed, not knowing what had happened, and the King, asking the news, was answered, The Wezir of thy brother hath slain him and his soldiers and guards, and come with his army to assault the city unawares; and the inhabitants, being unable to withstand, have submitted to him:—whereupon I said within myself, If I fall into his hand, he will slay me.—Griefs overwhelmed me, and I thought of the calamities which had befallen my father and my mother, and knew not what to do; for if I appeared, the people of the city would know me, and the troops of my father would hasten to kill and destroy me. I knew no way of escape but to shave off my beard: so I shaved it, and, having changed my clothes, departed from the city, and came hither, to this abode of peace, in the hope that some person would introduce me to the Prince of the Faithful, the Khalifeh of the Lord of all creatures, that I might relate to him my story, and all that had befallen me.

I arrived in this city this night ; and as I stood perplexed, not knowing whither to direct my steps, I saw this mendicant, and saluted him, and said, I am a stranger. He replied, And I, too, am a stranger :—and while we were thus addressing each other, our companion, this third person, came up to us, and, saluting us, said, I am a stranger. We replied, And we, also, are strangers. So we walked on together, and darkness overtook us, and destiny directed us unto your abode.—This was the cause of the shaving of my beard, and of the loss of my eye.

The lady then said to him, Stroke thy head, and depart :—but he replied, I will not depart until I have heard the stories of the others. And they wondered at his tale ; and the Khalifeh said to Ja'far, Verily I have never known the like of that which hath happened to this mendicant.

The second mendicant then advanced, and, having kissed the ground, said,—

THE STORY OF THE SECOND ROYAL MENDICANT

O my mistress, I was not born with only one eye ; but my story is wonderful, and, if written, would serve as a lesson to him who would be admonished. I am a King, and son of a King : I read the Kur'an according to the seven readings, and perused various works under the tuition of different learned professors of their subjects : I studied the science of the stars, and the writings of the poets, and made myself a proficient in all the sciences ; so that I surpassed the people of my age. My hand-writing was extolled among all the scribes, my fame spread among all countries, and my history among all Kings ; and the King of India, hearing of me, requested my father to allow me to visit him, sending him various gifts and curious presents, such as were suitable to Kings. My father, therefore, prepared for me six ships, and we proceeded by sea for the space of a whole month, after which we came to land ; and, having disembarked some horses which we had with us in the ship, we loaded ten

camels with presents, and commenced our journey; but soon there appeared a cloud of dust, which rose and spread until it filled the air before us, and, after a while, cleared a little, and discovered to us, in the midst of it, sixty horsemen like fierce lions, whom we perceived to be Arab highwaymen; and when they saw us, that we were a small company with ten loads of presents for the King of India, they galloped towards us, pointing their spears at us. We made signs to them with our fingers, and said, We are ambassadors to the honoured King of India; therefore do us no injury:—but they replied, We are not in his territories, nor under his government. They slew certain of the young men, and the rest fled. I also fled, after I had received a severe wound; the Arabs being employed, without further regard to us, in taking possession of the treasure and presents which we had with us.

I proceeded without knowing whither to direct my course, reduced from a mighty to an abject state, and journeyed till I arrived at the summit of a mountain, where I took shelter in a cavern until the next morning. I then resumed my journey, and arrived at a flourishing city: the winter, with its cold, had passed away, and the spring had come, with its flowers; and I rejoiced at my arrival there, being wearied with my journey, anxious and pallid. My condition being thus changed, I knew not whither to bend my steps; and, turning to a tailor sitting in his shop, I saluted him, and he returned my salutation, and welcomed me, and wished me joy, asking me the reason of my having come thither. I acquainted him, therefore, with what had befallen me from first to last, and he was grieved for me, and said, O young man, reveal not thy case, for I fear what the King of this city might do to thee, since he is the greatest of thy father's enemies, and hath a debt of blood against him. He then placed some food and drink before me, and we ate together, and I conversed with him till night, when he lodged me in a place by his shop, and brought me a bed and coverlet; and, after I had remained with him three days, he said to me, Dost thou not know any trade by which to make gain? I answered, I am acquainted with the law, a student of sciences, a writer, and

an arithmetician.—Thy occupation, he said, is profitless in our country: there is no one in our city acquainted with science or writing, but only with getting money. Verily, I replied, I know nothing but what I have told thee.—Gird thyself, then, said he, and take an axe and a rope, and cut firewood in the desert, and so obtain thy subsistence until God dispel thy affliction; but acquaint no one with thy history, else they will kill thee. He then bought for me an axe and a rope, and sent me with a party of wood-cutters, giving them a charge respecting me. Accordingly, I went forth with them, and cut some wood, and brought back a load upon my head, and sold it for half a piece of gold, part of which I expended in food, laying by the remainder.

Thus I continued for the space of a year, after which I went one day into the desert, according to my custom, to cut firewood; and, finding there a tract with abundance of wood, I entered it, and came to a tree, around which I dug; and as I was removing the earth from its roots, the axe struck against a ring of brass; and I cleared away the earth from it, and found that it was affixed to a trap-door of wood, which I immediately removed. Beneath it appeared a staircase, which I descended; and at the bottom of this I entered a door, and beheld a palace, strongly constructed, where I found a lady, like a pearl of high price, whose aspect banished from the heart all anxiety and grief and affliction. At the sight of her I prostrated myself in adoration of her Creator for the fairness and beauty which He had displayed in her person; and she, looking towards me, said, Art thou a man or a Jinni? I answered her, I am a man.—And who, she asked, hath brought thee to this place, in which I have lived five and twenty years without ever seeing a human being?—Her words sounded sweetly to me, and I answered her, O my mistress, God hath brought me to thy abode, and I hope will put an end to my anxiety and grief:—and I related to her my story from beginning to end. She was grieved at my case, and wept, and said, I also will acquaint thee with my story. Know that I am the daughter of the King of the further parts of India, the lord of the Ebony Island. My father had married me to the son of my uncle; but on the night of my bridal

festivities, an 'Efrit named Jarjaris, the son of Rejmus, the son of Iblis, carried me off, and, soaring with me through the air, alighted in this place, to which he conveyed all things necessary for me, such as ornaments, and garments, and linen, and furniture, and food, and drink ; and once in every ten days he cometh to me, and spendeth a night here ; and he hath appointed with me, that, in case of my wanting any thing by night or day, I should touch with my hand these two lines which are inscribed upon the kubbeh, and as soon as I remove my hand I see him before me. Four days have now passed since he was last with me, and there remain, therefore, six days before he will come again ; wilt thou then remain with me five days, and depart one day before his visit ?—I answered, Yes ;—rejoicing at the proposal ; and she arose, and, taking me by the hand, conducted me through an arched door to a small and elegant bath, where I took off my clothes, while she seated herself upon a mattress. After this, she seated me by her side, and brought me some sherbet of sugar infused with musk, and handed it to me to drink : she then placed some food before me, and after we had eaten and conversed together, she said to me, Sleep, and rest thyself ; for thou art fatigued.

I slept, O my mistress, and forgot all that had befallen me ; and when I awoke, I found her rubbing my feet ; upon which I called to her, and we sat down again and conversed a while ; and she said to me, By Allah, I was straitened in my heart, living here alone, without any person to talk with me, five and twenty years. Praise be to God who hath sent thee to me.—I thanked her for her kind expressions ; and love of her took possession of my heart, and my anxiety and grief fled away. We then sat down to drink together ; and I remained by her side all the night, delighted with her company, for I had never seen her like in my whole life ; and in the morning, when we were both full of joy, I said to her, Shall I take thee up from this subterranean place, and release thee from the Jinni ? But she laughed, and replied, Be content, and hold thy peace ; for, of every ten days, one day shall be for the 'Efrit, and nine for thee. I persisted, however, being overcome with passion ; and said, I will this instant demolish this kubbeh

upon which the inscription is engraved, and let the 'Efrit come, that I may slay him : for I am predestined to kill 'Efrits. She entreated me to refrain ; but, paying no attention to her words, I kicked the kubbeh with violence ; upon which she exclaimed, The 'Efrit hath arrived ! Did I not caution thee against this ? Verily thou hast brought a calamity upon me ; but save thyself, and ascend by the way that thou camest.

In the excess of my fear I forgot my sandals and my axe, and when I had ascended two steps, turning round to look for them, I saw that the ground had opened, and there rose from it an 'Efrit of hideous aspect, who said, Wherefore is this disturbance with which thou hast alarmed me, and what misfortune hath befallen thee ? She answered, No misfortune hath happened to me, excepting that my heart was contracted, and I desired to drink some wine to dilate it, and, rising to perform my purpose, I fell against the kubbeh.—Thou liest, vile woman, he exclaimed ;—and, looking about the palace to the right and left, he saw the sandals and axe ; and said to her, These are the property of none but a man. Who hath visited thee ?—I have not seen them, she answered, until this instant : probably they caught to thee.—This language, said he, is absurd, and will have no effect upon me, thou shameless woman !—and, so saying, he stripped her of her clothing, and tied her down, with her arms and legs extended, to four stakes, and began to beat her, urging her to confess what had happened.

For myself, being unable to endure her cries, I ascended the stairs, overpowered by fear, and, arriving at the top, replaced the trap-door as it was at first, and covered it over with earth. I repented bitterly of what I had done, and reflecting upon the lady and her beauty, and how this wretch was torturing her after she had lived with him five and twenty years, and that he tortured her only on my account, and reflecting also upon my father and his kingdom, and how I had been reduced to the condition of a wood-cutter, I repeated this verse :—

When fortune bringeth thee affliction, console thyself by remembering that one day thou must see prosperity, and another day, difficulty.

Returning to my companion, the tailor, I found him awaiting my return as if he were placed in a pan upon burning coals. I past last night, said he, with anxious heart on thy account, fearing for thee from some wild beast or other calamity. Praise be to God for thy safe return.—I thanked him for his tender concern for me, and entered my apartment ; and as I sat meditating upon that which had befallen me, and blaming myself for having kicked the kubbeh, my friend the tailor came in to me, and said, In the shop is a foreigner, who asks for thee, and he has thy axe and sandals ; he came with them to the wood-cutters,³¹ and said to them, I went out at the time of the call of the Mu'eddin to morning-prayer, and stumbled upon these, and know not to whom they belong : can ye guide me to their owner ?—The wood-cutters, therefore, directed him to thee : he is sitting in my shop ; so go out to him and thank him, and take thy axe and thy sandals.—On hearing these words, my countenance turned pale, and my whole state became changed ; and while I was in this condition, the floor of my chamber clove asunder, and there rose from it the stranger, and lo, he was the 'Efrit ; he had tortured the lady with the utmost cruelty ; but she would confess nothing : so he took the axe and the sandals, and said to her, If I am Jarjaris, of the descendants of Iblis, I will bring the owner of this axe and these sandals. Accordingly, he came, with the pretence before mentioned, to the wood-cutters, and, having entered my chamber, without granting me any delay, seized me, and soared with me through the air : he then descended, and dived into the earth, and brought me up into the palace where I was before.

Here I beheld the lady stripped of her clothing, and with blood flowing from her sides ; and tears trickled from my eyes. The 'Efrit then took hold of her, and said, Vile woman, this is thy lover :—whereupon she looked at me, and replied, I know him not, nor have I ever seen him until this instant. The 'Efrit said to her, With all this torture wilt thou not confess ? She answered, Never in my life have I seen him before, and it is not lawful in the sight of God that I should speak falsely against him.—Then, said he, if thou know him not, take this sword and strike off his head.

She took the sword, and came to me, and stood over my head : but I made a sign to her with my eyebrow, while tears ran down my cheeks. She replied in a similar manner, Thou art he who hath done all this to me :—I made a sign to her, however, that this was a time for pardon, conveying my meaning in the manner thus described by the poet :—

Our signal in love is the glance of our eyes ; and every intelligent person understandeth the sign.

Our eyebrows carry on an intercourse between us : we are silent ; but love speaketh.²²

And when she understood me, she threw the sword from her hand, O my mistress, and the 'Efrit handed it to me, saying, Strike off her head, and I will liberate thee, and do thee no harm. I replied, Good :—and, quickly approaching her, raised my hand ; but she made a sign as though she would say, I did no injury to thee :—whereupon my eyes poured with tears, and, throwing down the sword, I said, O mighty 'Efrit, and valiant hero, if a woman, deficient in sense and religion, seeth it not lawful to strike off my head, how is it lawful for me to do so to her, and especially when I have never seen her before in my life ? I will never do it, though I should drink the cup of death and destruction.—There is affection between you, said the 'Efrit, and, taking the sword, he struck off one of the hands of the lady ; then, the other ; after this, her right foot ; and then, her left foot : thus with four blows he cut off her four extremities, while I looked on, expecting my own death. She then made a sign to me with her eye ; and the 'Efrit, observing her, exclaimed, Now thou hast been guilty of incontinence with thine eye ! —and, with a blow of his sword, struck off her head ; after which, he turned towards me, and said, O man, it is allowed us by our law, if a wife be guilty of incontinence, to put her to death. This woman I carried off on her wedding-night, when she was twelve years of age, and she was acquainted with no man but me ; and I used to pass one night with her in the course of every ten days in the garb of a foreigner ; and when I discovered of a certainty that she had been unfaithful to me, I killed her : but as for thee, I am not convinced that thou hast wronged me with respect to her ; yet

I must not leave thee unpunished : choose, therefore, what injury I shall do to thee.

Upon this, O my mistress, I rejoiced exceedingly, and, eager to obtain his pardon, I said to him, What shall I choose from thy hands?—Choose, he answered, into what form I shall change thee ; either the form of a dog, or that of an ass, or that of an ape. I replied, in my desire of forgiveness, Verily, if thou wilt pardon me, God will pardon thee in recompense for thy shewing mercy to a Muslim who hath done thee no injury :—and I humbled myself in the most abject manner, and said to him, Pardon me as the envied man did the envier.—And how was that? said he. I answered as follows :—

THE STORY OF THE ENVIER AND THE ENVIED³³

Know, O my master, that there was a certain man who had a neighbour that envied him ; and the more this person envied him, so much the more did God increase the prosperity of the former. Thus it continued a long time ; but when the envied man found that his neighbour persisted in troubling him, he removed to a place where there was a deserted well ; and there he built for himself an oratory, and occupied himself in the worship of God. Numerous Fakirs* assembled around him, and he acquired great esteem, people repairing to him from every quarter, placing firm reliance upon his sanctity ; and his fame reached the ears of his envious neighbour, who mounted his horse, and went to visit him ; and when the envied man saw him, he saluted him, and payed him the utmost civility. The envier then said to him, I have come hither to inform thee of a matter in which thou wilt find advantage, and for which I shall obtain a recompense in heaven. The envied man replied, May God requite thee for me with every blessing. Then, said the envier, order the Fakirs to retire to their cells, for

* Poor persons who especially occupy themselves in religious exercises.

the information that I am about to give thee I would have no one overhear. So he ordered them to enter their cells; and the envier said to him, Arise, and let us walk together, and converse; and they walked on until they came to the deserted well before mentioned, when the envier pushed the envied man into this well, without the knowledge of any one, and went his way, imagining that he had killed him.

But this well was inhabited by Jinn, who received him unhurt, and seated him upon a large stone; and when they had done this, one of them said to the others, Do ye know this man? They answered, We know him not.—This, said he, is the envied man who fled from him who envied him, and took up his abode in this quarter, in the neighbouring oratory, and who entertaineth us by his zikr * and his readings; and when his envier heard of him, he came hither to him, and, devising a stratagem against him, threw him down here. His fame hath this night reached the Sultan of this city, who hath purposed to visit him to-morrow, on account of the affliction which hath befallen his daughter.—And what, said they, hath happened to his daughter? He answered, Madness; for Meymun, the son of Demdem, hath become inflamed with love for her; and her cure is the easiest of things. They asked him, What is it?—and he answered, The black cat that is with him in the oratory hath at the end of her tail a white spot, of the size of a piece of silver; and from this white spot should be taken seven hairs, and with these the damsel should be fumigated, and the Marid would depart from over her head, and not return to her; so she would be instantly cured. And now it is our duty to take him out.

When the morning came, the Fakirs saw the sheykh rising out of the well; and he became magnified in their eyes. And when he entered the oratory, he took from the white spot at the end of the cat's tail seven hairs, and placed them in a portfolio by him; and at sunrise the King came to him, and when the sheykh saw him, he said to him, O

* Zikrs consist in repeating the name of God, or the profession of his unity, etc., in chorus, accompanying the words by certain motions of the head, hands, or whole body.

King, thou hast come to visit me in order that I may cure thy daughter. The King replied, Yes, O virtuous Sheykh.—Then, said the sheykh, send some person to bring her hither; and I trust in God, whose name be exalted, that she may be instantly cured. And when the King had brought his daughter, the sheykh beheld her bound, and, seating her, suspended a curtain over her, and took out the hairs, and fumigated her with them; whereupon the Marid cried out from over her head, and left her; and the damsel immediately recovered her reason, and, veiling her face, said to her father, What is this, and wherefore didst thou bring me to this place? He answered her, Thou hast nothing to fear;—and rejoiced greatly. He kissed the hand of the envied sheykh, and said to the great men of his court who were with him, What shall be the recompense of this sheykh for that which he hath done? They answered, His recompense should be that thou marry him to her.—Ye have spoken truly, said the King:—and he gave her in marriage to him, and thus the sheykh became a connection of the King; and after some days the King died, and he was made King in his place.

And it happened one day that this envied King was riding with his troops, and he saw his envier approaching; and when this man came before him he seated him upon a horse with high distinction and honour, and, taking him to his palace, gave him a thousand pieces of gold, and a costly dress; after which he sent him back from the city, with attendants to escort him to his house, and reproached him for nothing.—Consider, then, O 'Efrit, the pardon of the envied to the envier, and his kindness to him, notwithstanding the injuries he had done him.—

The 'Efrit, when he had heard this story, replied, Lengthen not thy words to me: as to my killing thee, fear it not; and as to my pardoning thee, covet it not; but as to my enchanting thee, there is no escape from it;—and, so saying, he clove the earth asunder, and soared with me through the sky to such a height that I beheld the world beneath me as though it were a bowl of water; then, alighting

upon a mountain, he took up a little dust, and, having muttered and pronounced certain words over it, sprinkled me with it, saying, Quit this form, and take the form of an ape!—whereupon I became like an ape of a hundred years of age.

When I saw myself changed into this ugly form, I wept for myself, but determined to be patient under the tyranny of fortune, knowing it to be constant to no one. I descended from the summit of the mountain, and, after having journeyed for the space of a month, arrived at the seashore; and, when I had stood there a short time, I saw a vessel in the midst of the sea, with a favourable wind approaching the land; I therefore hid myself behind a rock on the beach, and when the ship came close up, I sprang into the midst of it. But as soon as the persons on board saw me, one of them cried, Turn out this unlucky brute from the ship:—another said, Let us kill him:—and a third exclaimed, I will kill him with this sword. I, however, caught hold of the end of the sword, and tears flowed from my eyes; at the sight of which the captain took compassion on me, and said to the passengers, O merchants, this ape hath sought my aid, and I give it him; he is under my protection; let no one, therefore, oppose or trouble him. He then treated me with kindness, and whatever he said to me I understood, and all that he required to be done I performed as his servant.

We continued our voyage for fifty days with a fair wind, and cast anchor under a large city containing a population which no one but God, whose name be exalted, could reckon; and when we had moored our vessel, there came to us some memluks from the King of the city, who came on board the ship, and complimented the merchants on their safe arrival, saying, Our King greeteth you, rejoicing in your safety, and hath sent to you this roll of paper, desiring that each of you shall write a line upon it; for the King had a Wezir who was an eminent calligraphist, and he is dead, and the King hath sworn that he will not appoint any person to his office who cannot write equally well.³⁴ Though in the form of an ape, I arose and snatched the paper from their hands; upon which, fearing that I would

tear it and throw it into the sea, they cried out against me, and would have killed me; but I made signs to them that I would write, and the captain said to them, Suffer him to write, and if he scribble we will turn him away; but if he write well I will adopt him as my son; for I have never seen a more intelligent ape. So I took the pen, and demanded the ink, and wrote in an epistolary hand this couplet:—

Fame hath recorded the virtues of the noble; but no one hath been able to reckon thine.

May God not deprive mankind of such a father; for thou art the parent of every excellence.

Then, in a more formal, large hand, I wrote the following verses:—

There is no writer that shall not perish; but what his hand hath written endureth ever.

Write, therefore, nothing but what will please thee when thou shalt see it on the day of resurrection.

Two other specimens I wrote, in two different and smaller hands, and returned the paper to the memluks, who took it back to the King; and when he saw what was written upon it, the hand of no one pleased him excepting mine; and he said to his attendants, Go to the author of this hand-writing, put upon him this dress, and mount him upon a mule, and conduct him, with the band of music before him, to my presence. On hearing this order, they smiled; and the King was angry with them, and said, How is it that I give you an order, and ye laugh at me? They answered, O King, we laugh not at thy words, but because he who wrote this is an ape, and not a son of Adam: he is with the captain of the ship newly arrived.

The King was astonished at their words; he shook with delight, and said, I would purchase this ape. He then sent some messengers to the ship, with the mule and the dress of honour, saying to them, Ye must clothe him with this dress, and mount him upon the mule, and bring him hither. So they came to the ship, and, taking me from the captain, clad me with the dress; and the people were astonished, and flocked to amuse themselves with the sight of me. And

when they brought me to the King, and I beheld him, I kissed the ground before him three times, and he ordered me to sit down: so I sat down upon my knees; and the persons present were surprised at my polite manners, and especially the King, who presently ordered his people to retire. They, therefore, did so; none remaining but the King, and a eunuch, and a young memluk, and myself. The King then commanded that a repast should be brought; and they placed before him a service of viands, such as gratified the appetite and delighted the eye; and the King made a sign to me that I should eat; whereupon I arose, and, having kissed the ground before him seven times, sat down to eat with him; and when the table was removed, I washed my hands, and, taking the ink-case, and pen and paper, I wrote these two verses:—

Great is my appetite for thee, O Kunafeh!* I cannot be happy
nor endure without thee.

Be thou every day and night my food; and may drops of honey
not be wanting to moisten thee.

Having done this, I arose, and seated myself at a distance; and the King, looking at what I had written, read it with astonishment, and exclaimed, Can an ape possess such fluency and such skill in calligraphy? This is, indeed, a wonder of wonders!—Afterwards, a chess-table was brought to the King, and he said to me, Wilt thou play? By a motion of my head I answered, Yes:—and I advanced, and arranged the pieces. I played with him twice, and beat him; and the King was perplexed, and said, Were this a man, he would surpass all the people of his age.

He then said to his eunuch, Go to thy mistress, and say to her, Answer the summons of the King:—that she may come and gratify her curiosity by the sight of this wonderful ape. The eunuch, therefore, went, and returned with his mistress, the King's daughter, who, as soon as she saw me, veiled her face, and said, O my father, how is it that thou art pleased to send for me, and suffer strange men to see

* A kind of pastry resembling vermicelli, made of wheat-flour. It is moistened with clarified butter—then baked, and sweetened with honey or sugar.

me?—O my daughter, answered the King, there is no one here but the young memluk, and the eunuch who brought thee up, and this ape, with myself, thy father: from whom, then, dost thou veil thy face?—This ape, said she, is the son of a King, and the name of his father is Eymar:²⁵ he is enchanted, and it was the 'Efrit Jarjaris, a descendant of Iblis, who transformed him, after having slain his own wife, the daughter of King Aknamus. This, whom thou supposedst to be an ape, is a learned and wise man.—The King was amazed at his daughter's words, and, looking towards me, said, Is it true that she saith of thee? I answered, by a motion of my head, Yes:—and wept. The King then said to his daughter, By what means didst thou discover that he was enchanted?—O my father, she answered, I had with me, in my younger years, an old woman who was a cunning enchantress, and she taught me the art of enchantment: I have committed its rules to memory, and know it thoroughly, being acquainted with a hundred and seventy modes of performing it, by the least of which I could transport the stones of thy city beyond Mount Kaf, and make its site to be an abyss of the sea, and convert its inhabitants into fish in the midst of it.—I conjure thee, then, by the name of Allah, said her father, to restore this young man, that I may make him my Wezir. Is it possible that thou possessedst this excellence, and I knew it not? Restore him, that I may make him my Wezir, for he is a polite and intelligent youth.

She replied, With pleasure:—and, taking a knife upon which were engraved some Hebrew names, marked with it a circle in the midst of the palace. Within this she wrote certain names and talismans, and then she pronounced invocations, and uttered unintelligible words; and soon the palace around us became immersed in gloom to such a degree, that we thought the whole world was overspread; and lo, the 'Efrit appeared before us in a most hideous shape, with hands like winnowing-forks, and legs like masts, and eyes like burning torches; so that we were terrified at him. The King's daughter exclaimed, No welcome to thee! —to which the 'Efrit, assuming the form of a lion, replied, Thou traitress, how is it that thou hast broken thine oath?

Did we not swear that we would not oppose one another?—Thou wretch, said she, when didst thou receive an oath?—The 'Efrit, still in the form of a lion, then exclaimed, Take what awaiteth thee!—and, opening his mouth, rushed upon the lady: but she instantly plucked a hair from her head and muttered with her lips, whereupon the hair became converted into a piercing sword, with which she struck the lion, and he was cleft in twain by the blow; but his head became changed into a scorpion. The lady immediately transformed herself into an enormous serpent, and crept after the execrable wretch in the shape of a scorpion, and a sharp contest ensued between them; after which, the scorpion became an eagle, and the serpent, changing to a vulture, pursued the eagle for a length of time. The latter then transformed himself into a black cat, and the King's daughter became a wolf, and they fought together long and fiercely, till the cat, seeing himself overcome, changed himself into a large red pomegranate, which fell into a pool; but, the wolf pursuing it, it ascended into the air, and then fell upon the pavement of the palace, and broke in pieces, its grains becoming scattered, each apart from the others, and all spread about the whole space of ground enclosed by the palace. The wolf, upon this, transformed itself into a cock, in order to pick up the grains, and not leave one of them; but, according to the decree of fate, one grain remained hidden by the side of the pool of the fountain. The cock began to cry, and flapped its wings, and made a sign to us with its beak; but we understood not what it would say. It then uttered at us such a cry, that we thought the palace had fallen down upon us; and it ran about the whole of the ground, until it saw the grain that had lain hid by the side of the pool, when it pounced upon it, to pick it up; but it fell into the midst of the water, and became transformed into a fish, and sank into the water; upon which the cock became a fish of a larger size, and plunged in after the other. For a while it was absent from our sight; but, at length, we heard a loud cry, and trembled at the sound; after which, the 'Efrit rose as a flame of fire, casting fire from his mouth, and fire and smoke from his eyes and nostrils: the King's daughter also became as a

vast body of fire; and we would have plunged into the water from fear of our being burnt and destroyed; but suddenly the 'Efrit cried out from within the fire, and came towards us upon the liwan,* blowing fire at our faces. The lady, however, overtook him, and blew fire in like manner in his face; and some sparks struck us both from her and from him: her sparks did us no harm; but one from him struck me in my eye, and destroyed it, I being still in the form of an ape; and a spark from him reached the face of the King, and burned the lower half, with his beard and mouth, and struck out his lower teeth: another spark also fell upon the breast of the eunuch; who was burnt, and died immediately. We expected destruction, and gave up all hope of preserving our lives; but while we were in this state, a voice exclaimed, God is most great! God is most great! He hath conquered and aided, and abandoned the denier of the faith of Mohammad, the chief of mankind!† —The person from whom this voice proceeded was the King's daughter: she had burnt the 'Efrit; and when we looked towards him, we perceived that he had become a heap of ashes.

The lady then came to us, and said, Bring me a cup of water:—and when it was brought to her, she pronounced over it some words which we understood not, and, sprinkling me with it, said, Be restored, by virtue of the name of the Truth, and by virtue of the most great name of God, to thy original form!—whereupon I became a man as I was at first, excepting that my eye was destroyed. After this, she cried out, The fire! the fire! O my father, I shall no longer live, for I am predestined to be killed. Had he been a human being, I had killed him at the first of the encounter. I experienced no difficulty till the scattering of the grains of the pomegranate, when I picked them up excepting the one in which was the life of the Jinni: had I picked up that, he had instantly died; but I saw it not, as fate and destiny had appointed; and suddenly he came upon me, and a fierce contest ensued between us under the earth, and in the air,

* Dais.

† This was, and I believe still is, a common battle-cry of the Arabs, and more commonly used on the occasion of a victory.

and in the water ; and every time that he tried against me a new mode, I employed against him one more potent, until he tried against me the mode of fire ; and rarely does one escape against whom the mode of fire is employed. Destiny, however, aided me, so that I burned him first ; but I exhorted him previously to embrace the faith of El-Islam. Now I die ; and may God supply my place to you.—Having thus said, she ceased not to pray for relief from the fire ; and lo, a spark ascended to her breast, and thence to her face ; and when it reached her face, she wept, and exclaimed, I testify that there is no deity but God, and I testify that Mohammad is God's Apostle !—We then looked towards her, and saw that she had become a heap of ashes by the side of the ashes of the 'Efrit.

We were plunged into grief on her account, and I wished that I had been in her place rather than have seen that sweet-faced creature who had done me this kindness reduced to a heap of ashes : but the decree of God cannot be averted. The King, on beholding his daughter in this state, plucked out what remained of his beard, and slapped his face, and rent his clothes ; and I also did the same, while we both wept for her. Then came the chamberlains and other great officers of the court, who, finding the King in a state of insensibility, with two heaps of ashes before him, were astonished, and remained encompassing him until he recovered from his fit, when he informed them of what had befallen his daughter with the 'Efrit ; and great was their affliction. The women shrieked, with the female slaves, and continued their mourning seven days. After this, the King gave orders to build, over the ashes of his daughter, a great tomb with a dome, and illuminated it with candles and lamps : but the ashes of the 'Efrit they scattered in the wind, exposing them to the curse of God. The King then fell sick, and was near unto death : his illness lasted a month ; but after this he recovered his health, and, summoning me to his presence, said to me, O young man, we passed our days in the enjoyment of the utmost happiness, secure from the vicissitudes of fortune, until thou camest to us, when troubles overcame us. Would that we had never seen thee, nor thy ugly form, on account of which we have been

reduced to this state of privation ; for, in the first place, I have lost my daughter, who was worth a hundred men ; and, secondly, I have suffered this burning, and lost my teeth : my eunuch also is dead : but it was not in thy power to prevent these afflictions : the decree of God hath been fulfilled on us and on thee ; and praise be to God that my daughter restored thee, though she destroyed herself. Now, however, depart, O my son, from my city. It is enough that hath happened on thy account ; but as it was decreed against us and thee, depart in peace.

So I departed, O my mistress, from his presence ; but before I quitted the city, I entered a public bath, and shaved my beard. I traversed various regions, and passed through great cities, and bent my course to the Abode of Peace, Baghdad, in the hope of obtaining an interview with the Prince of the Faithful, that I might relate to him all that had befallen me.

The third mendicant then advanced, and thus related his story :—

THE STORY OF THE THIRD ROYAL MENDICANT

O illustrious lady, my story is not like those of my two companions, but more wonderful : the course of fate and destiny brought upon them events against which they could not guard ; but as to myself, the shaving of my beard and the loss of my eye were occasioned by my provoking fate and misfortune ; and the cause was this :—

I was a King, and the son of a King ; and when my father died, I succeeded to his throne, and governed my subjects with justice and beneficence. I took pleasure in sea-voyages ; and my capital was on the shore of an extensive sea, interspersed with fortified and garrisoned islands, which I desired, for my amusement, to visit ; I therefore embarked with a fleet of ten ships, and took with me provisions sufficient for a whole month. I proceeded twenty days, after which there arose against us a contrary

wind; but at daybreak it ceased, and the sea became calm, and we arrived at an island, where we landed, and cooked some provisions and ate; after which we remained there two days. We then continued our voyage; and when twenty days more had passed, we found ourselves in strange waters, unknown to the captain, and desired the watch to look out from the mast-head: so he went aloft, and when he had come down he said to the captain, I saw, on my right hand, fish floating upon the surface of the water; and looking towards the midst of the sea, I perceived something looming in the distance, sometimes black, and sometimes white.

When the captain heard this report of the watch, he threw his turban on the deck, and plucked his beard, and said to those who were with him, Receive warning of our destruction, which will befall all of us: not one will escape! So saying, he began to weep; and all of us in like manner bewailed our lot. I desired him to inform us of that which the watch had seen. O my lord, he replied, know that we have wandered from our course since the commencement of the contrary wind that was followed in the morning by a calm, in consequence of which we remained stationary two days: from that period we have deviated from our course for twenty-one days, and we have no wind to carry us back from the fate which awaits us after this day: to-morrow we shall arrive at a mountain of black stone, called loadstone: the current is now bearing us violently towards it, and the ships will fall in pieces, and every nail in them will fly to the mountain, and adhere to it; for God hath given to the loadstone a secret property by virtue of which everything of iron is attracted towards it. On that mountain is such a quantity of iron as no one knoweth but God, whose name be exalted; for from times of old great numbers of ships have been destroyed by the influence of that mountain. There is, upon the summit of the mountain, a cupola of brass supported by ten columns, and upon the top of this cupola is a horseman upon a horse of brass, having in his hand a brazen spear, and upon his breast suspended a tablet of lead, upon which are engraved mysterious names and talismans; and as long, O King, as

this horseman remains upon the horse, so long will every ship that approaches be destroyed, with every person on board, and all the iron contained in it will cleave to the mountain: no one will be safe until the horseman shall have fallen from the horse.—The captain then wept bitterly; and we felt assured that our destruction was inevitable, and every one of us bade adieu to his friend.

On the following morning we drew near to the mountain; the current carried us towards it with violence, and when the ships were almost close to it, they fell asunder, and all the nails, and every thing else that was of iron, flew from them towards the loadstone. It was near the close of day when the ships fell in pieces. Some of us were drowned, and some escaped; but the greater number were drowned, and of those who saved their lives none knew what became of the others, so stupefied were they by the waves and the boisterous wind. As for myself, O my mistress, God, whose name be exalted, spared me on account of the trouble and torment and affliction that He had predestined to befall me. I placed myself upon a plank, and the wind and waves cast it upon the mountain; and when I had landed, I found a practicable way to the summit, resembling steps cut in the rock: so I exclaimed, In the name of God!—and offered up a prayer, and attempted the ascent, holding fast by the notches; and presently God stilled the wind and assisted me in my endeavours, so that I arrived in safety at the summit. Rejoicing greatly in my escape, I immediately entered the cupola, and performed the prayers of two *rek'ahs** in gratitude to God for my preservation; after which I slept beneath the cupola, and heard a voice saying to me, O son of Khasib, when thou awakest from thy sleep, dig beneath thy feet, and thou wilt find a bow of brass, and three arrows of lead, whereon are engraved talismans: then take the bow and arrows and shoot at the horseman that is upon the top of the cupola, and relieve mankind from this

* [Bowings]: the repetition of a set form of words, chiefly from the Kur'an, and ejaculations of "God is most great!" etc., accompanied by particular postures; part of the words being repeated in an erect posture; part, sitting; and part, in other postures: an inclination of the head and body, followed by two prostrations, distinguishing each *rek'ah*.

great affliction ; for when thou hast shot at the horseman he will fall into the sea ; the bow will also fall, and do thou bury it in its place ; and as soon as thou hast done this, the sea will swell and rise until it attains the summit of the mountain ; and there will appear upon it a boat bearing a man, different from him whom thou shalt have cast down, and he will come to thee, having an oar in his hand : then do thou embark with him ; but utter not the name of God ; and he will convey thee in ten days to a safe sea, where, on thy arrival, thou wilt find one who will take thee to thy city. All this shall be done if thou utter not the name of God.

Awaking from my sleep, I sprang up, and did as the voice had directed. I shot at the horseman, and he fell into the sea ; and the bow having fallen from my hand, I buried it : the sea then became troubled, and rose to the summit of the mountain, and when I had stood waiting there a little while, I beheld a boat in the midst of the sea, approaching me. I praised God, whose name be exalted, and when the boat came to me I found in it a man of brass, with a tablet of lead upon his breast, engraven with names and talismans. Without uttering a word, I embarked in the boat, and the man rowed me ten successive days, after which I beheld the islands of security, whereupon, in the excess of my joy, I exclaimed, In the name of God ! There is no deity but God ! God is most great !—and as soon as I had done this, he cast me out of the boat, and sank in the sea.

Being able to swim, I swam until night, when my arms and shoulders were tired, and, in this perilous situation, I repeated the profession of the faith, and gave myself up as lost ; but the sea rose with the violence of the wind, and a wave like a vast castle threw me upon the land, in order to the accomplishment of the purpose of God. I ascended the shore, and after I had wrung out my clothes, and spread them upon the ground to dry, I slept ; and in the morning I put on my clothes again, and, looking about to see which way I should go, I found a tract covered with trees, to which I advanced ; and when I had walked round it, I found that I was upon a small island in the midst of the sea ; upon which I said within myself, Every time that I escape from

one calamity I fall into another that is worse :—but while I was reflecting upon my unfortunate case, and wishing for death, I beheld a vessel bearing a number of men. I arose immediately, and climbed into a tree; and lo, the vessel came to the shore, and there landed from it ten black slaves bearing axes. They proceeded to the middle of the island, and, digging up the earth, uncovered and lifted up a trap-door, after which they returned to the vessel, and brought from it bread and flour and clarified butter and honey and sheep and everything that the wants of an inhabitant would require, continuing to pass backwards and forwards between the vessel and the trap-door, bringing loads from the former, and entering the latter, until they had removed all the stores from the ship. They then came out of the vessel with various clothes of the most beautiful description, and in the midst of them was an old sheykh, enfeebled and wasted by extreme age, leading by the hand a young man cast in the mould of graceful symmetry, and invested with such perfect beauty as deserved to be a subject for proverbs. He was like a fresh and slender twig, enchanting and captivating every heart by his elegant form. The party proceeded to the trap-door, and, entering it, became concealed from my eyes.³⁸

They remained beneath about two hours, or more ; after which, the sheykh and the slaves came out ; but the youth came not with them ; and they replaced the earth, and embarked and set sail. Soon after, I descended from the tree, and went to the excavation. I removed the earth, and, entering the aperture, saw a flight of wooden steps, which I descended ; and, at the bottom, I beheld a handsome dwelling-place, furnished with a variety of silken carpets ; and there was the youth, sitting upon a high mattress, with sweet-smelling flowers and fruits placed before him. On seeing me, his countenance became pale ; but I saluted him, and said, Let thy mind be composed, O my master : thou hast nothing to fear, O delight of my eye ; for I am a man, and the son of a King, like thyself : fate hath impelled me to thee, that I may cheer thee in thy solitude. The youth, when he heard me thus address him, and was convinced that I was one of his own species, rejoiced exceedingly at my

arrival, his colour returned, and, desiring me to approach him, he said, O my brother, my story is wonderful: my father is a jeweller: he had slaves who made voyages by his orders, for the purposes of commerce, and he had dealings with Kings; but he had never been blest with a son; and he dreamt that he was soon to have a son, but one whose life would be short; and he awoke sorrowful. Shortly after, in accordance with the decrees of God, my mother conceived me, and when her time was complete, she gave birth to me; and my father was greatly rejoiced: the astrologers, however, came to him, and said, Thy son will live fifteen years: his fate is intimated by the fact that there is, in the sea, a mountain called the Mountain of Loadstone, whereon is a horseman on a horse of brass, on the former of which is a tablet of lead suspended to his neck; and when the horseman shall be thrown down from his horse, thy son will be slain: the person who is to slay him is he who will throw down the horseman, and his name is King 'Ajib, the son of King Khasib. My father was greatly afflicted at this announcement; and when he had reared me until I had nearly attained the age of fifteen years, the astrologers came again, and informed him that the horseman had fallen into the sea, and that it had been thrown down by King 'Ajib, the son of King Khasib; on hearing which, he prepared for me this dwelling, and here left me to remain until the completion of the term, of which there now remain ten days. All this he did from fear lest King 'Ajib should kill me.

When I heard this, I was filled with wonder, and said within myself, I am King 'Ajib, the son of King Khasib, and it was I who threw down the horseman; but, by Allah, I will neither kill him nor do him any injury. Then said I to the youth, Far from thee be both destruction and harm, if it be the will of God, whose name be exalted: thou hast nothing to fear: I will remain with thee to serve thee, and will go forth with thee to thy father, and beg of him to send me back to my country, for the which he will obtain a reward. The youth rejoiced at my words, and I sat and conversed with him until night, when I spread his bed for him, and covered him, and slept near to his side. And in the morning I brought him water, and he washed his face, and said to me,

May God requite thee for me with every blessing. If I escape from King 'Ajib, I will make my father reward thee with abundant favours.—Never, I replied, may the day arrive that would bring thee misfortune. I then placed before him some refreshments, and after we had eaten together, we passed the day conversing with the utmost cheerfulness.

I continued to serve him for nine days; and on the tenth day the youth rejoiced at finding himself in safety, and said to me, O my brother, I wish that thou wouldest in thy kindness warm for me some water, that I may wash myself and change my clothes; for I have smelt the odour of escape from death, in consequence of thy assistance.—With pleasure, I replied;—and I arose, and warmed the water; after which, he entered a place concealed from my view, and, having washed himself and changed his clothes, laid himself upon the mattress to rest after his bath. He then said to me, Cut up for me, O my brother, a water-melon, and mix its juice with some sugar:—so I arose, and, taking a melon, brought it upon a plate, and said to him, Knowest thou, O my master, where is the knife?—See, here it is, he answered, upon the shelf over my head. I sprang up hastily, and took it from its sheath, and as I was drawing back, my foot slipped, as God had decreed, and I fell upon the youth, grasping in my hand the knife, which entered his body, and he died instantly. When I perceived that he was dead, and that I had killed him, I uttered a loud shriek, and beat my face, and rent my clothes, saying, This is, indeed, a calamity! O what a calamity! O my Lord, I implore thy pardon, and declare to Thee my innocence of his death! Would that I had died before him! How long shall I devour trouble after trouble!

With these reflections I ascended the steps, and, having replaced the trap-door, returned to my first station, and looked over the sea, where I saw the vessel that had come before, approaching, and cleaving the waves in its rapid course. Upon this I said within myself, Now will the men come forth from the vessel, and find the youth slain, and they will slay me also:—so I climbed into a tree, and concealed myself among its leaves, and sat there till the vessel arrived and cast anchor, when the slaves landed with the

old sheykh, the father of the youth, and went to the place, and removed the earth. They were surprised at finding it moist, and, when they had descended the steps, they discovered the youth lying on his back, exhibiting a face beaming with beauty, though dead, and clad in white and clean clothing, with the knife remaining in his body. They all wept at the sight, and the father fell down in a swoon, which lasted so long that the slaves thought he was dead. At length, however, he recovered, and came out with the slaves, who had wrapped the body of the youth in his clothes. They then took back all that was in the subterranean dwelling to the vessel, and departed.

I remained, O my mistress, by day hiding myself in a tree, and at night walking about the open part of the island. Thus I continued for the space of two months; and I perceived that, on the western side of the island, the water of the sea every day retired, until, after three months, the land that had been beneath it became dry. Rejoicing at this, and feeling confident now in my escape, I traversed this dry tract, and arrived at an expanse of sand; whereupon I emboldened myself, and crossed it. I then saw in the distance an appearance of fire, and, advancing towards it, found it to be a palace, overlaid with plates of copper, which, reflecting the rays of the sun, seemed from a distance to be fire: and when I drew near to it, reflecting upon this sight, there approached me an old sheykh, accompanied by ten young men who were all blind of one eye, at which I was extremely surprised. As soon as they saw me, they saluted me, and asked me my story, which I related to them from first to last; and they were filled with wonder. They then conducted me into the palace, where I saw ten benches, upon each of which was a mattress covered with a blue stuff; * and each of the young men seated himself upon one of these benches, while the sheykh took his place upon a smaller one; after which they said to me, Sit down, O young man, and ask no question respecting our condition, nor respecting our being blind of one eye. Then the sheykh arose, and brought to each of them some food, and the same to me also; and next he brought to each of us some wine;

* The colour of mourning.

and after we had eaten, we sat drinking together until the time for sleep, when the young men said to the sheykh, Bring to us our accustomed supply:—upon which the sheykh arose, and entered a closet, from which he brought, upon his head, ten covered trays. Placing these upon the floor, he lighted ten candles, and stuck one of them upon each tray; and, having done this, he removed the covers, and there appeared beneath them ashes mixed with pounded charcoal. The young men then tucked up their sleeves above the elbow, and blackened their faces, and slapped their cheeks, exclaiming, We were reposing at our ease, and our impertinent curiosity suffered us not to remain so! Thus they did until the morning, when the sheykh brought them some hot water, and they washed their faces, and put on other clothes.

On witnessing this conduct, my reason was confounded, my heart was so troubled that I forgot my own misfortunes, and I asked them the cause of their strange behaviour; upon which they looked towards me, and said, O young man, ask not respecting that which doth not concern thee; but be silent; for in silence is security from error.—I remained with them a whole month, during which, every night they did the same; and at length I said to them, I conjure you by Allah to remove this disquiet from my mind, and to inform me of the cause of your acting in this manner, and of your exclaiming, We were reposing at our ease, and our impertinent curiosity suffered us not to remain so!—if ye inform me not, I will leave you, and go my way; for the proverb saith, When the eye seeth not, the heart doth not grieve.—On hearing these words, they replied, We have not concealed this affair from thee but in our concern for thy welfare, lest thou shouldst become like us, and the same affliction that hath befallen us happen also to thee. I said, however, Ye must positively inform me of this matter.—We give thee good advice, said they, and do thou receive it, and ask us not respecting our case; otherwise thou wilt become blind of one eye, like us:—but I still persisted in my request; whereupon they said, O young man, if this befall thee, know that thou wilt be banished from our company. They then all arose, and, taking a ram, slaughtered

and skinned it, and said to me, Take this knife with thee, and introduce thyself into the skin of the ram, and we will sew thee up in it, and go away ; whereupon a bird called the rukh will come to thee, and, taking thee up by its talons, will fly away with thee, and set thee down upon a mountain : then cut open the skin with this knife, and get out, and the bird will fly away. Thou must arise, as soon as it hath gone, and journey for half a day, and thou wilt see before thee a lofty palace, encased with red gold, set with various precious stones, such as emeralds and rubies, &c. ; and if thou enter it thy case will be as ours ; for our entrance into that palace was the cause of our being blind of one eye ; and if one of us would relate to thee all that hath befallen him, his story would be too long for thee to hear.

They then sewed me up in the skin, and entered their palace ; and soon after, there came an enormous white bird, which seized me, and flew away with me, and set me down upon the mountain ; whereupon I cut open the skin, and got out ; and the bird, as soon as it saw me, flew away. I rose up quickly, and proceeded towards the palace, which I found to be as they had described it to me ; and when I had entered it, I beheld, at the upper end of a saloon, forty young damsels, beautiful as so many moons, and magnificently attired, who, as soon as they saw me, exclaimed, Welcome ! Welcome ! O our master and our lord ! We have been for a month expecting thee. Praise be to God who hath blessed us with one who is worthy of us, and one of whom we are worthy !—After having thus greeted me, they seated me upon a mattress, and said, Thou art from this day our master and prince, and we are thy handmaids, and entirely under thy authority. They then brought to me some refreshments, and, when I had eaten and drunk, they sat and conversed with me, full of joy and happiness. So lovely were these ladies, that even a devotee, if he saw them, would gladly consent to be their servant, and to comply with all that they would desire. At the approach of night they all assembled around me, and placed before me a table of fresh and dried fruits, with other delicacies that the tongue cannot describe, and wine ; and one began to

sing, while another played upon the lute. The wine-cups circulated among us, and joy overcame me to such a degree as to obliterate from my mind every earthly care, and make me exclaim, This is indeed a delightful life! I passed a night of such enjoyment as I had never before experienced; and on the morrow I entered the bath; and, after I had washed myself, they brought me a suit of the richest clothing, and we again sat down to a repast.

In this manner I lived with them a whole year; but on the first day of the new year, they seated themselves around me, and began to weep, and bade me farewell, clinging to my skirts.—What calamity hath befallen you? said I. Ye have broken my heart.—They answered, Would that we had never known thee; for we have associated with many men, but have seen none like thee. May God, therefore, not deprive us of thy company.—And they wept afresh. I said to them, I wish that you would acquaint me with the cause of this weeping.—Thou, they replied, art the cause; yet now, if thou wilt attend to what we tell thee, we shall never be parted; but if thou act contrary to it, we are separated from this time; and our hearts whisper to us that thou wilt not regard our warning.—Inform me, said I, and I will attend to your directions:—and they replied, If then thou wouldst inquire respecting our history, know that we are the daughters of Kings: for many years it hath been our custom to assemble here, and every year we absent ourselves during a period of forty days; then returning, we indulge ourselves for a year in feasting and drinking. This is our usual practice; and now we fear that thou wilt disregard our directions when we are absent from thee. We deliver to thee the keys of the palace, which are a hundred in number, belonging to a hundred closets. Open each of these, and amuse thyself, and eat and drink, and refresh thyself, excepting the closet that hath a door of red gold; for if thou open this, the consequence will be a separation between us and thee. We conjure thee, therefore, to observe our direction, and to be patient during this period.—Upon hearing this, I swore to them that I would never open the closet to which they alluded; and they departed, urging me to be faithful to my promise.

I remained alone in the palace, and at the approach of evening I opened the first closet, and, entering it, found a mansion like paradise, with a garden containing green trees loaded with ripe fruits, abounding with singing birds, and watered by copious streams. My heart was soothed by the sight, and I wandered among the trees, scenting the fragrance of the flowers, and listening to the warbling of the birds as they sang the praises of the One, the Almighty. After admiring the mingled colours of the apple resembling the hue upon the cheek of a beloved mistress and the sallow countenance of the perplexed and timid lover, the sweet-smelling quince diffusing an odour like musk and ambergris, and the plum shining as the ruby, I retired from this place, and, having locked the door, opened that of the next closet, within which I beheld a spacious tract planted with numerous palm-trees, and watered by a river flowing among rose-trees, and jasmine, and marjoram, and eglantine, and narcissus, and gilliflower, the odours of which, diffused in every direction by the wind, inspired me with the utmost delight. I locked again the door of the second closet, and opened that of the third. Within this I found a large saloon, paved with marbles of various colours, and with costly minerals and precious gems, and containing cages constructed of sandal and aloes-wood with singing birds within them, and others upon the branches of trees which were planted there. My heart was charmed, my trouble was dissipated, and I slept there until the morning. I then opened the door of the fourth closet, and within this door I found a great building in which were forty closets with open doors; and, entering these, I beheld pearls, and rubies, and chrysolites, and emeralds, and other precious jewels such as the tongue cannot describe. I was astonished at the sight, and said, Such things as these, I imagine, are not found in the treasury of any King. I am now the King of my age, and all these treasures, through the goodness of God, are mine, together with forty damsels under my authority who have no man to share them with me.

Thus I continued to amuse myself, passing from one place to another, until thirty-nine days had elapsed, and I had opened the doors of all the closets excepting that which

they had forbidden me to open. My heart was then disturbed by curiosity respecting this hundredth closet, and the Devil, in order to plunge me into misery, induced me to open it. I had not patience to abstain, though there remained of the appointed period only one day: so I approached the closet, and opened the door; and when I had entered, I perceived a fragrant odour, such as I had never before smelt, which intoxicated me so that I fell down insensible, and remained some time in this state: but at length recovering, I fortified my heart, and proceeded. I found the floor overspread with saffron, and the place illuminated by golden lamps and by candles, which diffused the odours of musk and ambergris; and two large perfuming-vessels filled with aloes-wood and ambergris, and a perfume compounded with honey, spread fragrance through the whole place. I saw also a black horse, of the hue of the darkest night, before which was a manger of white crystal filled with cleansed sesame, and another, similar to it, containing rose-water infused with musk: he was saddled and bridled, and his saddle was of red gold. Wondering at the sight of him, I said within myself, This must be an animal of extraordinary qualities;—and, seduced by the Devil, I led him out, and mounted him; but he moved not from his place: I kicked him with my heel; but still he moved not: so I took a mikra'ah and struck him with it; and as soon as he felt the blow he uttered a sound like thunder, and, expanding a pair of wings, soared with me to an immense height through the air, and then alighted upon the roof of another palace, where he threw me from his back, and, by a violent blow with his tail upon my face, as I sat on the roof, struck out my eye, and left me.²⁷

In this state I descended from the roof, and below I found the one-eyed young men before mentioned, who, as soon as they beheld me, exclaimed, No welcome to thee!—Receive me, said I, into your company:—but they replied, By Allah, thou shalt not remain with us:—so I departed from them, with mournful heart and weeping eye, and, God having decreed me a safe journey hither, I arrived at Baghdad, after I had shaved my beard, and become a mendicant.—

The mistress of the house then looked towards the Khalifeh and Ja'far and Mesrur, and said to them, Acquaint me with your histories:—upon which Ja'far advanced towards her, and related to her the same story that he had told to the portress before they entered; and when she had heard it, she liberated them all. They accordingly departed, and when they had gone out into the street, the Khalifeh inquired of the mendicants whither they were going. They answered that they knew not whither to go: whereupon he desired them to accompany his party; and then said to Ja'far, Take them home with thee, and bring them before me to-morrow, and we will see the result. Ja'far, therefore, did as he was commanded, and the Khalifeh returned to his palace; but he was unable to sleep during the remainder of the night.

On the following morning he sat upon his throne, and when his courtiers had presented themselves before him, and departed, excepting Ja'far, he said to him, Bring before me the three ladies and the two bitches and the mendicants. So Ja'far arose, and brought them, and, placing the ladies behind the curtains, said to them, We have forgiven you on account of your previous kindness to us, and because ye knew us not; and now I acquaint you that ye are in the presence of the fifth of the sons of El-'Abbas, Harun Er-Rashid; therefore relate to him nothing but the truth. And when the ladies heard the words which Ja'far addressed to them on the part of the Khalifeh, the eldest of them advanced, and thus related her story:—

THE STORY OF THE FIRST OF THE THREE LADIES OF BAGHDAD

O Prince of the Faithful, my story is wonderful; for these two bitches²⁰ are my sisters, born to my father, but of another mother; and I am the youngest of the three. After the death of our father, who left us five thousand pieces of gold, these my two sisters married, and when they had resided some time with their husbands, each of

the latter prepared a stock of merchandise, and received from his wife a thousand pieces of gold, and they all set forth on a journey together, leaving me here; but after they had been absent four years, my sisters' husbands lost all their property, and abandoned them in a strange land, and they returned to me in the garb of beggars. When I first saw them in this state, I knew them not; and, as soon as I recognised them, I exclaimed, How is it that ye are in this condition?—O our sister, they answered, thy inquiry now is of no use: the Pen hath written what God hath decreed.—I sent them, therefore, to the bath, and, having clad them in new apparel, said to them, O my sisters, ye are my elders, and I am young; so ye shall be to me in the places of my father and mother. The inheritance which I shared with you God hath blessed; partake then of its increase, for my affairs are prosperous; and I and ye shall fare alike.—I treated them with the utmost kindness, and during a whole year they remained with me, and enriched themselves by the money that I had given them; but after this period they said to me, It will be more agreeable to us to marry again, for we can no longer abstain from doing so.—O my sisters, I replied, ye have seen no happiness in marriage: a good husband in this age is rarely found, and ye have already had experience of the marriage-state. They, however, heeded not my words; but married against my consent: yet I gave them dowries from my own property, and continued to them my protection. They went to their husbands, and the latter, after they had resided with them a short time, defrauded them of all that they possessed, and, setting forth on a journey, left them destitute: so again they returned to me, and, in a state of nudity, implored my forgiveness, saying, Be not angry with us; for though thou art younger than we, thou hast more mature sense; and we promise thee that we will never again mention the subject of marriage. I replied, Ye are welcome, O my sisters; for I have no one dearer to me than yourselves:—and I received them, and treated them with every kindness, and we remained happily together for the space of a year.

After this I resolved to fit out a vessel for a mercantile voyage:²⁹ accordingly, I stocked a large ship with various

goods and necessary provisions, and said to my sisters, Will ye rather stay at home during my voyage, or will ye go with me?—to which they answered, We will accompany thee during the voyage, for we cannot endure to be separated from thee. I therefore took them with me, and we set sail; but first I divided my property into two equal portions; one of which I took with me, and the other I concealed, saying within myself, Perhaps some evil accident may happen to the ship, and our lives may be prolonged; in which case, when we return we shall find that which will be of service to us.—We continued our voyage by day and night, till at length the vessel pursued a wrong course, and the captain knew not whither to steer. The ship had entered a different sea from that which we wished to cross, and for some time we knew it not; but for ten days we had a pleasant wind, and after this, a city loomed before us in the distance. We asked the captain what was the name of this city; and he answered, I know it not; I have never seen it till this day, nor have I ever before in the course of my life navigated this sea: but as we have come hither in safety, ye have nothing to do but to enter this city and land your goods, and, if ye find opportunity, sell or exchange there: if not, we will rest there two days, and take in fresh provisions. So we entered the port of the city, and the captain landed, and after a while returned to us, saying, Arise, and go up into the city, and wonder at that which God hath done unto his creatures, and pray to be preserved from his anger. And when we had entered the city, we found all its inhabitants converted into black stones. We were amazed at the sight, and as we walked through the market-streets, finding the merchandise and the gold and silver remaining in their original state, we rejoiced, and said, This must have been occasioned by some wonderful circumstance. We then separated in the streets, each of us attracted from his companions by the wealth and stuffs in the shops.

As for myself, I ascended to the citadel, which I found to be a building of admirable construction; and, entering the King's palace, I found all the vessels of gold and silver remaining in their places, and the King himself seated in the midst of his Chamberlains and Viceroy and Wezirs,

and clad in apparel of astonishing richness. Drawing nearer to him, I perceived that he was sitting upon a throne adorned with pearls and jewels, every one of the pearls shining like a star: his dress was embroidered with gold, and around him stood fifty memluks, attired in silks of various descriptions, and having in their hands drawn swords. Stupefied at this spectacle, I proceeded, and entered the saloon of the Harim, upon the walls of which were hung silken curtains; and here I beheld the Queen, attired in a dress embroidered with fresh pearls, and having upon her head a diadem adorned with various jewels, and necklaces of different kinds on her neck. All her clothing and ornaments remained as they were at first, though she herself was converted into black stone. Here also I found an open door, and, entering it, I saw a flight of seven steps, by which I ascended to an apartment paved with marble, furnished with gold-embroidered carpets, and containing a couch of alabaster, ornamented with pearls and jewels; but my eyes were first attracted by a gleam of light, and when I approached the spot whence it proceeded, I found a brilliant jewel, of the size of an ostrich's egg, placed upon a small stool, diffusing a light like that of a candle. The coverings of the couch above mentioned were of various kinds of silk, the richness of which would surprise every beholder; and I looked at them with wonder. In this apartment I likewise observed some lighted candles, and reflected that there must then have been some person there to light them. I passed thence to another part of the palace, and continued to explore the different apartments, forgetting myself in the amazement of my mind at all these strange circumstances, and immersed in thoughts respecting what I beheld, until the commencement of night, when I would have departed; but could not find the door: so I returned to the place in which were the lighted candles, and there I laid myself upon the couch, and, covering myself with a quilt, repeated some words of the Kur'an, and endeavoured to compose myself to sleep; but I could not. I continued restless: and at midnight I heard a recitation of the Kur'an, performed by a melodious and soft voice; upon which I arose, and, looking about, saw a closet with an open door, and I entered

it, and found that it was an oratory: lighted lamps were suspended in it, and upon a prayer-carpet spread on the floor sat a young man of handsome aspect. Wondering that he had escaped the fate of the other inhabitants of the city, I saluted him; and he raised his eyes, and returned my salutation: and I then said to him, I conjure thee by the truth of that which thou art reading in the Book of God, that thou answer the question which I am about to ask thee:—whereupon he smiled, and replied, Do thou first acquaint me with the cause of thine entrance into this place, and then I will answer thy question: so I told him my story, and inquired of him the history of this city. Wait a little, said he;—and he closed the Kur'an, and, having put it in a bag of satin, seated me by his side. As I now beheld him, his countenance appeared like the full moon, and his whole person exhibited such perfect elegance and loveliness, that a single glance at him drew from me a thousand sighs, and kindled a fire in my heart. I repeated my request that he would give me an account of the city; and, replying, I hear and obey, he thus addressed me:—

Know that this city belonged to my father and his family and subjects; and he is the King whom thou hast seen converted into stone; and the Queen whom thou hast seen is my mother. They were all Magians, worshipping fire in the place of the Almighty King; and they swore by the fire and the light, and the shade and the heat, and the revolving orb. My father had no son, till, in his declining years, he was blest with me, whom he reared until I attained to manhood. But, happily for me, there was, in our family, an old woman, far advanced in age, who was a Muslimeh, believing in God and his Apostle in her heart, though she conformed with my family in outward observances; and my father confided in her, on account of the faithfulness and modesty that he had observed in her character, and shewed her great favour, firmly believing that she held the same faith as himself; therefore, when I had passed my infancy, he committed me to her care, saying, Take him, and rear him, and instruct him in the ordinances of our faith, and educate him and serve him in the best manner. The old woman accordingly received me, but took care to instruct

me in the faith of El-Islam, teaching me the laws of purification, and the divine ordinances of ablution, together with the forms of prayer ; after which she made me commit to memory the whole of the Kur'an. She then charged me to keep my faith a secret from my father, lest he should kill me ; and I did so ; and a few days after, the old woman died. The inhabitants of the city had now increased in their impiety and arrogance, and in their dereliction of the truth ; and while they were in this state, they heard a crier proclaim with a voice like thunder, so as to be audible to both the near and the distant, O inhabitants of this city, abstain from the worship of fire, and worship the Almighty King !—The people were struck with consternation, and, flocking to my father, the King of the city, said to him, What is this alarming voice which hath astounded us by its terrible sound ?—but he answered them, Let not the voice terrify you, nor let it turn you from your faith :—and their hearts inclined to his words ; so they persevered in the worship of fire, and remained obstinate in their impiety during another year, until the return of the period at which they had heard the voice the first time. It was then heard a second time ; and again, in the next year, they heard it a third time ; but still they persisted in their evil ways, until, drawing down upon themselves the abhorrence and indignation of Heaven, one morning, shortly after daybreak, they were converted into black stones, together with their beasts and all their cattle. Not one of the inhabitants of the city escaped, excepting me ; and from the day on which this catastrophe happened, I have continued occupied as thou seest, in prayer, and fasting, and reading the Kur'an : but I have become weary of this solitary state, having no one to cheer me with his company.

On hearing these words, I said to him, Wilt thou go with me to the city of Baghdad, and visit its learned men and lawyers, and increase thy knowledge ? If so, I will be thy handmaid, though I am the mistress of my family, and have authority over a household of men. I have here a ship laden with merchandise, and destiny hath driven us to this city, in order that we might become acquainted with these events : our meeting was predestined.—In this manner I

continued to persuade him until he gave his consent. I slept that night at his feet, unconscious of my state through excessive joy; and in the morning we rose, and, entering the treasuries, took away a quantity of the lighter and most valuable of the articles that they contained, and descended from the citadel into the city, where we met the slaves and the captain, who were searching for me. They were rejoiced at seeing me, and, to their questions respecting my absence, I replied by informing them of all that I had seen, and related to them the history of the young man, and the cause of the transmutation of the people of the city, and of all that had befallen them, which filled them with wonder. But when my two sisters saw me with the young man, they envied me on his account, and malevolently plotted against me.

We embarked again, and I experienced the utmost happiness, chiefly owing to the company of the young man; and after we had waited a while till the wind was favourable, we spread our sails, and departed. My sisters sat with me and the young man; and, in their conversation with me, said, O our sister, what dost thou purpose to do with this handsome youth? I answered, I desire to take him as my husband:—and, turning to him, and approaching him, I said, O my master, I wish to make a proposal to thee, and do not thou oppose it. He replied, I hear and obey:—and I then looked towards my sisters, and said to them, This young man is all that I desire, and all the wealth that is here is yours.—Excellent, they replied, is thy determination:—yet still they designed evil against me.—We continued our voyage with a favourable wind, and, quitting the sea of peril, entered the sea of security, across which we proceeded for some days, until we drew near to the city of El-Basrah, the buildings of which loomed before us at the approach of evening; but as soon as we had fallen asleep, my sisters took us up in our bed, both myself and the young man, and threw us into the sea. The youth, being unable to swim, was drowned: God recorded him among the company of the martyrs; while I was registered among those whose life was yet to be preserved; and, accordingly, as soon as I awoke and found myself in the sea, the providence of God

supplied me with a piece of timber, upon which I placed myself, and the waves cast me upon the shore of an island.

During the remainder of the night I walked along this island, and in the morning I saw a neck of land, bearing the marks of a man's feet, and uniting with the main land. The sun having now risen, I dried my clothes in its rays, and proceeded along the path that I had discovered until I drew near to the shore upon which stands the city, when I beheld a snake approaching me, and followed by a serpent which was endeavouring to destroy it: the tongue of the snake was hanging from its mouth in consequence of excessive fatigue, and it excited my compassion; so I took up a stone, and threw it at the head of the serpent, which instantly died: the snake then extended a pair of wings, and soared aloft into the sky, leaving me in wonder at the sight. At the time of this occurrence I had become so fatigued, that I now laid myself down and slept; but I awoke after a little while, and found a damsel seated at my feet, and gently rubbing them with her hands; upon which I immediately sat up, feeling ashamed that she should perform this service for me, and said to her, Who art thou, and what dost thou want?—How soon hast thou forgotten me! she exclaimed: I am she to whom thou hast just done a kindness, by killing my enemy: I am the snake whom thou savedst from the serpent; for I am a Jinniyeh, and the serpent was a Jinni at enmity with me; and none but thou delivered me from him: therefore, as soon as thou didst this, I flew to the ship from which thy sisters cast thee, and transported all that it contained to thy house: I then sunk it; but as to thy sisters, I transformed them by enchantment into two black bitches; for I knew all that they had done to thee: the young man, however, is drowned.—Having thus said, she took me up, and placed me with the two black bitches on the roof of my house: and I found all the treasures that the ship had contained collected in the midst of my house: nothing was lost. She then said to me, I swear by that which was engraved upon the seal of Suleyman, that, if thou do not inflict three hundred lashes upon each of these bitches every day, I will come and transform thee in the like manner:—so I replied,

I hear and obey :—and have continued ever since to inflict upon them these stripes, though pitying them while I do so.

The Khalifeh heard this story with astonishment, and then said to the second lady, And what occasioned the stripes of which thou bearest the marks? She answered as follows :—

THE STORY OF THE SECOND OF THE THREE LADIES OF BAGHDAD

O Prince of the Faithful, my father, at his death, left considerable property; and soon after that event I married to one of the wealthiest men of the age, who, when I had lived with him a year, died, and I inherited from him eighty thousand pieces of gold, the portion that fell to me according to the law; with part of which I made for myself ten suits of clothing, each of the value of a thousand pieces of gold. And as I was sitting one day, there entered my apartment an old woman, disgustingly ugly, who saluted me, and said, I have an orphan daughter whose marriage I am to celebrate this night, and I would have thee obtain a reward and recompence in heaven by thy being present at her nuptial festivity; for she is broken-hearted, having none to befriend her but God, whose name be exalted. She then wept, and kissed my feet; and, being moved with pity and compassion, I assented, upon which she desired me to prepare myself, telling me that she would come at the hour of nightfall and take me; and so saying, she kissed my hand, and departed.

I arose immediately, and attired myself, and when I had completed my preparations, the old woman returned, saying, O my mistress, the ladies of the city have arrived, and I have informed them of thy coming, and they are waiting with joy to receive thee :—so I put on my outer garments, and, taking my female slaves with me, proceeded until we arrived at a street in which a soft wind was delightfully playing, where we saw a gateway over-arched with a marble

vault, admirably constructed, forming the entrance to a palace which rose from the earth to the clouds. On our arrival there, the old woman knocked at the door, and, when it was opened, we entered a carpeted passage, illuminated by lamps and candles, and decorated with jewels and precious metals. Through this passage we passed into a saloon of unequalled magnificence, furnished with mattresses covered with silk, lighted by hanging lamps and by candles, and having, at its upper end, a couch of alabaster decorated with pearls and jewels, and canopied by curtains of satin, from which there came forth a lady beautiful as the moon, who exclaimed to me, Most welcome art thou, O my sister: thou delightest me by thy company, and refreshest my heart. She then sat down again, and said to me, O my sister, I have a brother who hath seen thee at a festivity: he is a young man, more handsome than myself, and, his heart being violently inflamed with love of thee, he hath bribed this old woman to go to thee, and to employ this artifice in order to obtain for me an interview with thee. He desireth to marry thee according to the ordinance of God and his Apostle, and in that which is lawful there is no disgrace.— When I heard these words, and saw myself thus confined in the house so that I could not escape, I replied, I hear and obey:—and the lady, rejoicing at my consent, clapped her hands, and opened a door, upon which there came out from it a young man so surpassingly handsome, that my heart immediately inclined to him. No sooner had he sat down than the Kadi and four witnesses entered, and saluted us, and proceeded to perform the ceremony of the marriage-contract between me and the young man; which having done, they departed; and when they had retired, the young man looked towards me, and said, May our night be blessed. He then informed me that he desired to impose a covenant upon me, and, bringing a copy of the Kur'an, said, Swear that thou wilt not indulge a preference, nor at all incline, to any man but me:—and when I had sworn to this effect, he rejoiced exceedingly, and embraced me; and the love of him took entire possession of my heart.

We lived together in the utmost happiness for the space of a month, after which I begged that he would allow me

to go to the bazar, in order to purchase some stuffs for dress, and, having obtained his permission, went thither in company with the old woman, and seated myself at the shop of a young merchant with whom she was acquainted, and whose father, as she informed me, had died, and left him great wealth. She desired him to shew me his most costly stuffs ; and while he was occupied in doing so, she began to utter various flattering expressions in praise of him ; but I said to her, We have no concern with the praises that thou bestowest upon him ; we desire only to make our purchase, and to return home. Meanwhile he produced to us what we wanted, and we handed him the money : he refused, however, to take it, saying, It is an offering of hospitality to you for your visit this day :—whereupon I said to the old woman, If he will not take the money, return to him his stuff. But he would not receive it again, and exclaimed, By Allah, I will take nothing from you : all this is a present from me for a single kiss, which I shall value more than the entire contents of my shop.—What will a kiss profit thee ? asked the old woman. Then, turning to me, she said, O my daughter, thou hast heard what the youth hath said : no harm will befall thee if he give thee a kiss, and thou shalt take what thou wantest.—Dost thou not know, said I, that I have taken an oath ? She answered, Let him kiss thee then without thy speaking, and so it will be of no consequence to thee, and thou shalt take back thy money. Thus she continued to palliate the matter until I put my head (as it were) into the bag, and consented : so I covered my eyes, and held the edge of my veil in such a manner as to prevent the passengers from seeing me, whereupon he put his mouth to my cheek beneath the veil, but instead of merely kissing me, he lacerated my cheek by a violent bite. I fell into a swoon from the pain, and the old woman laid me on her lap till I recovered, when I found the shop closed, and the old woman uttering expressions of grief, and saying, What God hath averted would have been a greater calamity ; let us return home, and do thou feign to be ill, and I will come to thee and apply a remedy that shall cure the wound, and thou wilt quickly be restored.

After remaining there some time longer, I rose, and, in

a state of great uneasiness and fear, returned to the house, and professed myself ill ; upon which my husband came in to me, and said, What hath befallen thee, O my mistress, during this excursion ? I answered, I am not well.—And what is this wound, said he, that is upon thy cheek, and in the soft part ? I answered, When I asked thy permission, and went out to-day to purchase some stuff for dress, a camel loaded with firewood drove against me in the crowd, and tore my veil, and wounded my cheek as thou seest, for the streets of this city are narrow.—To-morrow, then, he exclaimed, I will go to the governor, and make a complaint to him, and he shall hang every seller of firewood in the city.—By Allah, said I, burden not thyself by an injury to any one ; for the truth is, that I was riding upon an ass, which took fright with me, and I fell upon the ground, and a stick lacerated my cheek.—If it be so, then, he replied, I will go to-morrow to Ja'far El-Barmeki, and relate the matter to him, and he shall kill every ass-driver in this city.—Wilt thou, said I, kill all those men on my account, when this which befell me was decreed by God ?—Undoubtedly, he answered ; and, so saying, he seized me violently, and then sprang up, and uttered a loud cry, upon which the door opened, and there came forth from it seven black slaves, who dragged me from my bed, and threw me down in the middle of the apartment ; whereupon he ordered one of them to hold me by my shoulders and to sit upon my head ; and another, to sit upon my knees and to hold my feet. A third then came, with a sword in his hand, and said, O my lord, shall I strike her with the sword, and cleave her in twain, that each of these may take a half and throw it into the Tigris for the fish to devour ? For such is the punishment of her who is unfaithful to her oath and to the laws of love.—My husband answered, Strike her, O Sa'd :—and the slave, with the drawn sword in his hand, said, Repeat the profession of the faith, and reflect what thou wouldest have to be done, that thou mayest give thy testamentary directions, for this is the end of thy life.—Good slave, I replied, release me for a while that I may do so :—and I raised my head, and, weeping as I spoke, addressed my husband with these verses :—

You render me lovelorn, and remain at ease. You make my wounded eyelid to be restless, and you sleep.
 Your abode is between my heart and my eyes ; and my heart will not relinquish you, nor my tears conceal my passion.
 You made a covenant with me that you would remain faithful ; but when you had gained possession of my heart you deceived me. Will you not pity my love for you and my moaning ? Have you yourself been secure from misfortunes ?
 I conjure you, by Allah, if I die, that you write upon my tombstone, This was a slave of love.
 That, perchance, some mourner who hath felt the same flame may pass by the lover's grave, and pity her.

But on hearing these verses, and witnessing my weeping, he became more incensed, and replied in the words of this couplet :—

I reject not the beloved of my heart from weariness : her own guilty conduct is the cause of her punishment.
 She desired that another should share with me her love ; but the faith of my heart inclineth not to partnership.

I continued to weep, and to endeavour to excite his compassion, saying within myself, I will humble me before him, and address him with soft words, that he may at least refrain from killing me, though he take all that I possess ;—but he cried out to the slave, Cleave her in twain ; for she is no longer of any value to us.—So the slave approached me, and I now felt assured of my death, and committed myself to God ; but suddenly the old woman came and threw herself at my husband's feet, and, kissing them, exclaimed, O my son, by the care with which I nursed thee, I conjure thee to pardon this damsel, for she hath committed no offence that deserveth such a punishment : thou art young, and I fear the effect of the imprecations that she may utter against thee :—and after she had thus addressed him, she wept, and continued to importune him, until, at length, he said, I pardon her, but must cause her to bear upon her person such marks of her offence as shall last for the remainder of her life. So saying, he commanded the slaves to strip off my vest, and, taking a stick cut from a quince-tree, he beat me upon my back and my sides until I became insensible from the violence of the blows, and despaired of my life. He then ordered the slaves to take

me away as soon as it was night, accompanied by the old woman, and to throw me into my house in which I formerly resided. They accordingly executed their lord's commands, and when they had deposited me in my house, I applied myself to the healing of my wounds; but, after I had cured myself, my sides still bore the appearance of having been beaten with mikra'ahs. I continued to apply remedies for four months before I was restored, and then repaired to view the house in which this event had happened; but I found it reduced to ruin, and the whole street pulled down; the site of the house I found occupied by mounds of rubbish, and I knew not the cause.

Under these circumstances, I went to reside with this my sister, who is of the same father as myself, and I found with her these two bitches. Having saluted her, I informed her of all that had befallen me; to which she replied, Who is secure from the afflictions of fortune? Praise be to God who terminated the affair with safety to thy life!—She then related to me her own story, and that of her two sisters, and I remained with her, and neither of us ever mentioned the subject of marriage. Afterwards we were joined by this our other sister, the cateress, who every day goes out to purchase for us whatever we happen to want.

The Khalifeh was astonished at this story, and ordered it to be recorded in a book, as an authentic history, and deposited the book in his library. And he said to the first lady, Knowest thou where the Jinniyeh ⁴⁰ who enchanted thy sister is to be found? She answered, O Prince of the Faithful, she gave me a lock of her hair, and said, When thou desirest my presence, burn a few of these hairs, and I will be with thee quickly, though I should be beyond Mount Kaf.—Bring then the hair, said the Khalifeh. The lady, therefore, produced it; and the Khalifeh, taking it, burned a portion of it, and, when the odour had diffused itself, the palace shook, and they heard a sound of thunder, and lo, the Jinniyeh appeared before them. She was a Muslimeh, and therefore greeted the Khalifeh by saying, Peace be on thee, O Khalifeh of God!—to which he replied, On you be

peace, and the mercy of God, and his blessings ! *—She then said, Know that this lady hath conferred on me a benefit for which I am unable to requite her; for she rescued me from death, by killing my enemy; and I, having seen what her sisters had done to her, determined to take vengeance upon them; therefore I transformed them by enchantment into two bitches; and, indeed, I had wished rather to kill them, fearing lest they should trouble her; but now, if thou desire their restoration, O Prince of the Faithful, I will restore them, as a favour to thee and to her; for I am one of the true believers.—Do so, said the Khalifeh; and then we will enter upon the consideration of the affair of the lady who hath been beaten, and examine her case, and if her veracity be established, I will take vengeance for her upon him who hath oppressed her. The Jinniyeh replied, O Prince of the Faithful, I will guide thee to the discovery of him who acted thus to this lady, and oppressed her, and took her property: he is thy nearest relation. She then took a cup of water, and, having pronounced a spell over it, sprinkled the faces of the two bitches, saying, Be restored to your original human forms!—whereupon they became again two young ladies.—Extolled be the perfection of their Creator! Having done this, the Jinniyeh said, O Prince of the Faithful, he who beat the lady is thy son El-Emin, who had heard of her beauty and loveliness:—and she proceeded to relate what had happened. The Khalifeh was astonished, and exclaimed, Praise be to God for the restoration of these two bitches which hath been effected through my means!—and immediately he summoned before him his son El-Emin, and inquired of him the history of the lady; and he related to him the truth. He then sent for Kadis and witnesses, and the first lady and her two sisters who had been transformed into bitches he married to the three mendicants who had related that they were the sons of Kings; and these he made chamberlains of his court, appointing them all that they required, and allotting them apartments in the palace of Baghdad. The lady who had been beaten he restored to his son El-Emin, giving her

* This salutation and its reply are to be given only to and by Muslims.

a large property, and ordering that the house should be rebuilt in a more handsome style. Lastly, the lady-cateress he took as his own wife; he admitted her at once to his own apartment, and, on the following day, he appointed her a separate lodging for herself, with female slaves to wait upon her: he also allotted to her a regular income; and afterwards built for her a palace.

CHAPTER IV

[NIGHTS 18—24]

THE STORY OF THE THREE APPLES, &c.

ONE night, after the adventure above described, the Khalifeh Harun Er-Rashid said to Ja'far, his Wezir, We will go down to-night into the city, and inquire respecting the affairs of those who are at present in authority, and him against whom any one shall complain we will displace. Ja'far replied, I hear and obey :—and when the Khalifeh had gone forth with him and Mesrur, and they had passed through several of the market-streets, they proceeded along a lane, and saw there an old man, with a net and basket upon his head, and a staff in his hand, walking at his leisure, and reciting these verses :—

They say to me, Thou shinest among mankind, by thy knowledge,
like the moonlight night :

But I answer, Abstain from thus addressing me, since there is no
knowledge without power :

For if they would pawn me, and my knowledge with me, and all
my papers and inkhorn too,

For one day's food, they would never find the pledge accepted to
the day of judgment.

As for the poor, and his condition, and his whole life, how full of
trouble !

In the summer he fails to earn his food, and in winter he warms
himself over the fire-pot.

The dogs follow him wherever he goes, and any reviler, and he
cannot repel him.

If he states his case, and proves himself wronged, the judge will
not admit his plea.

Such, then, being the poor man's life, his fittest place is in the
burial-ground.

The Khalifeh, when he heard his recitation, said to
Ja'far, Observe this poor man, and consider these verses ;

for they indicate his necessity. Then approaching the man, he said to him, O sheykh, what is thine occupation?—O my master, answered the old man, I am a fisherman, and have a family to maintain, and I went forth from my house at noon, and have remained until now, but God hath allotted me nothing wherewith to obtain food for my household; therefore I have hated myself, and wished for death.—Wilt thou, said the Khalifeh, return with us to the river, and station thyself on the bank of the Tigris, and cast thy net for my luck? If thou wilt do so I will purchase of thee whatever cometh up for a hundred pieces of gold.—The fisherman rejoiced when he heard these words, and said, On my head be your commands: I will return with you.—So he went again to the river, and cast his net, and, having waited till it sank, drew the cords, and dragged back the net, and there came up in it a chest, locked and heavy. When the Khalifeh saw it, he felt its weight, and found it to be heavy; and he gave a hundred pieces of gold to the fisherman, who went away, while Mesrur, assisted by Ja'far, took up the chest, and conveyed it, in company with the Khalifeh, to the palace, where they lighted the candles, and placed the chest before the Khalifeh. Ja'far and Mesrur then broke it open, and they found in it a basket of palm-leaves sewed up with red worsted; and they cut the threads, and saw within it a piece of carpet, and, lifting up this, they found beneath it an izar, and when they had taken up the izar they discovered under it a damsel like molten silver, killed, and cut in pieces.

When the Khalifeh beheld this, tears ran down his cheeks, and, looking towards Ja'far, he exclaimed, O dog of Wezirs, shall people be murdered in my time, and be thrown into the river, and become burdens upon my responsibility? By Allah, I must retaliate for this damsel upon him who killed her, and put him to death!—Then said he to Ja'far, By the truth of my descent from the Khalifehs of the sons of El-'Abbas, if thou do not bring to me him who killed this woman, that I may avenge her upon him, I will crucify thee at the gate of my palace, together with forty of thy kinsmen!⁴ And the Khalifeh was enraged.—Grant me, said Ja'far, a delay of three days.—I grant thee the delay, replied

the Khalifeh. Ja'far then went forth from his presence, and took his route through the city, sorrowful, and saying within himself, How shall I discover him who killed this damsel, that I may take him before the Khalifeh? And if I take to him any other person, he will become a weight upon my conscience. I know not what to do.—For three days he remained in his house, and on the fourth day the Khalifeh sent to summon him, and, when he had presented himself before him, said to him, Where is the murderer of the damsel?—O Prince of the Faithful, answered Ja'far, am I acquainted with things hidden from the senses, that I should know who is her murderer? The Khalifeh, incensed at this answer, gave orders to crucify him at the gate of his palace, and commanded a crier to proclaim through the streets of Baghdad, Whosoever desireth to amuse himself by seeing the crucifixion of Ja'far El-Barmeki, the Wezir of the Khalifeh, and the crucifixion of his kinsmen, at the gate of the Khalifeh's palace, let him come forth and amuse himself.—So the people came forth from every quarter to see the crucifixion of Ja'far and his kinsmen; and they knew not the cause of this. The Khalifeh then gave orders to set up the crosses; and they did so, and placed the Wezir and his kinsmen beneath, to crucify them, and were awaiting the Khalifeh's permission, while the people wept for Ja'far and his relatives.

But while they were thus waiting, a handsome and neatly-dressed young man came forward quickly through the crowd, and, approaching the Wezir, said to him, Safety to thee from this predicament, O chief of Emirs, and refuge of the poor! It was I who killed the woman whom ye found in the chest: kill me therefore for her, and retaliate her death upon me.—When Ja'far heard these words, he rejoiced for his own deliverance, and grieved for the young man: but while he was speaking to him, lo, an old sheykh pressed hastily through the crowd to him and the young man, and, having saluted them, said, O Wezir, believe not the words of this young man, for no one killed the damsel but myself; therefore retaliate her death upon me. The young man, however, said, O Wezir, this is an old man, imbecile through age; he knoweth not what he saith: it was I who killed

her; avenge her therefore upon me.—O my son, said the sheykh, thou art young, and wilt find pleasure in the world; and I am old, and satiated with the world: I will be a ransom for thee and for the Wezir and his kinsmen; and no one killed the damsel but myself: by Allah, therefore, hasten to retaliate upon me.

On witnessing this scene, the Wezir was astonished; and he took the young man and the sheykh to the Khalifeh, and said, O Prince of the Faithful, the murderer of the damsel hath come.—Where is he? said the Khalifeh. This young man, answered Ja'far, saith, I am the murderer;—and this sheykh accuseth him of falsehood, and saith, Nay, but *I* am the murderer. The Khalifeh, looking towards the sheykh and the young man, said, Which of you killed this damsel? The young man answered, No one killed her but myself:—and the sheykh said also, No one killed her but myself. The Khalifeh therefore said to Ja'far, Take them both and crucify them.—If the murderer be one, replied Ja'far, to kill the other would be unjust. The young man then said, By Him who raised the heavens and spread out the earth, it was I who killed the damsel:—and he gave an account of the manner of his killing her, and described what the Khalifeh had found. The Khalifeh therefore was convinced that the young man was he who had killed the damsel; and he was astonished, and said, What was the cause of thy killing this damsel unjustly, and of thy confessing the murder without being beaten, and thy saying, Retaliate her death upon me? The young man answered as follows:—

Know, O Prince of the Faithful, that this damsel was my wife, and the daughter of my uncle: this sheykh was her father, and is my uncle. I married her when she was a virgin, and God blessed me with three male children by her; and she loved me and served me, and I saw in her no evil. At the commencement of this month she was attacked by a severe illness, and I brought to her the physicians, who attended her until her health returned to her; and I desired them to send her to the bath; but she said to me, I want something before I enter the bath, for I have a longing for it.—What is it? said I. She answered, I have a longing for an apple, to smell it, and take a bite from it. So I went

out immediately into the city, and searched for the apple, and would have bought it had its price been a piece of gold : but I could not find one. I passed the next night full of thought, and when the morning came I quitted my house again and went about to all the gardens, one after another ; yet I found none in them. There met me, however, an old gardener, of whom I inquired for the apple, and he said to me, O my son, this is a rare thing, and not to be found here, nor anywhere except in the garden of the Prince of the Faithful at El-Basrah, and preserved there for the Khalifeh. I returned therefore to my wife, and my love for her so constrained me that I prepared myself and journeyed fifteen days, by night and day, in going and returning, and brought her three apples which I purchased of the gardener at El-Basrah for three pieces of gold ; and, going in, I handed them to her ; but she was not pleased by them, and left them by her side. She was then suffering from a violent fever, and she continued ill during a period of ten days.

After this she recovered her health, and I went out and repaired to my shop, and sat there to sell and buy ; and while I was thus occupied, at mid-day there passed by me a black slave, having in his hand an apple, with which he was playing : so I said to him, Whence didst thou get this apple, for I would procure one like it ?—Upon which he laughed, and answered, I got it from my sweetheart : I had been absent, and came, and found her ill, and she had three apples ; and she said to me, My unsuspecting husband journeyed to El-Basrah for them, and bought them for three pieces of gold :—and I took this apple from her.—When I heard the words of the slave, O Prince of the Faithful, the world became black before my face, and I shut up my shop, and returned to my house, deprived of my reason by excessive rage. I found not the third apple, and said to her, Where is the apple ? She answered, I know not whither it is gone. I was convinced thus that the slave had spoken the truth, and I arose, and took a knife, and, throwing myself upon her bosom, plunged the knife into her : I then cut off her head and limbs, and put them in the basket in haste, and covered them with the izar, over which I laid a piece of carpet ; then I put the basket in the chest, and, having

locked this, conveyed it on my mule, and threw it with my own hands into the Tigris.

And now, continued the young man, I conjure thee by Allah, O Prince of the Faithful, to hasten my death in retaliation for her murder, as I dread, otherwise, her appeal for vengeance upon me on the day of resurrection : for when I had thrown her into the Tigris without the knowledge of any one, I returned to my house, and found my eldest boy crying, though he knew not what I had done to his mother : so I said to him, What maketh thee cry ?—and he answered, I took one of the apples that my mother had, and went down with it into the street to play with my brothers, and a tall black slave snatched it from me, and said to me, Whence came this to thee ? I answered him, My father made a journey for it, and brought it from El-Basrah, for the sake of my mother ; for she is sick : he bought three apples for three pieces of gold :—but he took it from me and beat me, and went away with it ; and I am afraid that my mother may beat me on account of the apple.—When I heard my son's story, I discovered that the slave had forged a lie against the daughter of my uncle, and found that she had been killed unjustly ; and as I was weeping bitterly for what I had done, this sheykh, my uncle and her father, came to me, and I informed him of the event ; and he seated himself by me, and wept. We wept until midnight, and continued our mourning for her five days, ceasing not to the present day to bewail her death. By the honour of thine ancestors, therefore, hasten my death, to retaliate her murder upon me.

The Khalifeh wondered at the young man's story, and said, By Allah, I will not put to death any but the wicked slave ; for the young man is excusable. Then looking towards Ja'far, he said to him, Bring before me this wicked slave who hath been the cause of the catastrophe ; or, if thou bring him not, thou shalt be put to death in his stead. So the Wezir departed weeping, and saying, Whence shall I bring him ? Not every time that the jar is struck doth it escape being broken ! I have no stratagem to employ in this affair : but He who delivered me in the first case may deliver me in the second. By Allah, I will not go out from my house for three days ; and the Truth, whose

perfection be extolled, will do what He willeth!—So he remained in his house three days, and on the fourth day he caused the Kadi to be brought, and made his testamentary arrangements ; and as he was bidding farewell to his children, and weeping, lo, the messenger of the Khalifeh came and said to him, The Prince of the Faithful is in a most violent rage, and hath sent me to thee ; and he hath sworn that this day shall not pass until thou art put to death if thou do not bring to him the slave.

On hearing this, Ja'far wept, and his children wept with him ; and when he had bidden them all farewell except his youngest daughter, he approached her for the same purpose. He loved her more than all his other children ; and he pressed her to his bosom, and wept at the thought of his separation from her ; but, in doing this, he felt something round in her pocket, and said to her, What is in thy pocket? She answered, O my father, it is an apple ; our slave Reyhan brought it, and I have had it four days : he would not give it me until he had received from me two pieces of gold.—At this mention of the slave and the apple, Ja'far rejoiced, and exclaimed, O ready Dispeller of trouble!—and immediately he ordered that the slave should be brought before him. He was therefore brought in, and he said to him, Whence came this apple?—O my master, he answered, I went out five days ago, and, entering one of the by-streets of the city, I saw some children playing, and one of them had this apple ; and I snatched it from him, and beat him ; and he cried, and said, That belongs to my mother, and she is sick : she wanted my father to bring her an apple, and he made a journey to El-Basrah, and brought back for her three apples which he bought for three pieces of gold ; and I took this to play with it :—then he cried again ; but, paying no regard to him, I took it away and brought it hither ; and my little mistress bought it of me for two pieces of gold.—When he heard this story, Ja'far was filled with wonder at discovering that this distressing event, and the murder of the damsel, had been occasioned by his slave ; and he took the slave and went with him to the Khalifeh, who ordered that the story should be committed to writing, and published.

Ja'far then said to him, Wonder not, O Prince of the Faithful, at his tale, for it is not more extraordinary than the story of the Wezir Nur-ed-Din, and Shems-ed-Din, his brother.—What story, said the Khalifeh, can be more wonderful than this?—O Prince of the Faithful, replied Ja'far, I will not relate it to thee unless on the condition that thou exempt my slave from the punishment of death. The Khalifeh said, I give thee his blood:—and Ja'far, thereupon, commenced the relation of the story as follows:—

THE STORY OF NUR-ED-DIN AND HIS SON, AND OF SHEMS-ED-DIN AND HIS DAUGHTER

Know, O Prince of the Faithful, that there was, in Cairo,⁴² a Sultan, just and beneficent, who had a wise and well-informed Wezir, possessing a knowledge of the affairs of the world, and of the art of government. This minister was an aged man, and he had two sons, like two moons: the name of the elder was Shems-ed-Din, and that of the younger, Nur-ed-Din; and the latter was more distinguished than the former by handsomeness and comeliness: there was no one in his day more handsome, so that the fame of his charms spread through the neighbouring regions, and some of the inhabitants of those parts travelled to his country merely to obtain a sight of him. And it came to pass that their father died, and the Sultan mourned for him, and, turning his regards towards the two sons, took them into his favour, invested them with robes of honour, and said to them, Ye two are instated in your father's office:—at which they rejoiced, and kissed the ground before him. They observed the ceremonies of mourning for their father during a period of a whole month, and entered upon the office of Wezirs, each of them discharging the duties of this station for a week at a time; and whenever the Sultan had a desire to go forth on a journey, he took one of them with him.

Now it happened, one night, that the Sultan purposed commencing a journey on the following morning; and it

was the turn of the elder Wezir to accompany him; and as the two brothers were conversing together that night, the elder said, O my brother, it is my wish that we should both marry on one night.—Do, O my brother, as thou desirest, answered the younger; and I will comply with that which thou shalt say. So they agreed to do this. The elder then said to his brother, If God so decree that we obtain the betrothal of two maidens, and accomplish our marriage on the same night, and they give birth to children on the same day, and God will that thy wife have a son, and my wife have a daughter, we will marry them to each other, for they will be cousins.—And what, O my brother, said Nur-ed-Din, wilt thou require of my son as the dowry of thy daughter? He answered, I will require of thy son, as the dowry of my daughter, three thousand pieces of gold, and three gardens, and three farms; for if the young man make any other contract than this, it will not be proper. But when Nur-ed-Din heard this proposal, he exclaimed, What is this dowry that thou imposest upon my son? Dost thou not know that we are two brothers, and that we are both Wezirs, of one dignity? It were incumbent on thee to offer thy daughter to my son as a free gift, without any dowry; for thou knowest that the male is more honourable than the female, and my child is a male, and by him shall our memory be preserved: not by thy daughter.—What sayest thou of her? asked his brother.—That our memory will not be preserved by her among the nobles, answered Nur-ed-Din. But thou desirest, added he, to act with me according to the opinion of him who saith, If thou desire to drive away a person who would buy, demand of him a high price.—I see thee, replied Shems-ed-Din, to have committed a fault, in making thy son more honourable than my daughter: thou art doubtless deficient in judgment, and destitute of good disposition, seeing that thou mentionest the partnership in the office of Wezir, when I admitted thee not to share it with me excepting in my pity for thee, and that thou mightest assist me: but talk as thou wilt: since thou hast said this, by Allah, I will not marry my daughter to thy son, though thou offer me her weight in gold.—On hearing these words of his brother, Nur-ed-Din was enraged,

and said, I will not marry my son to thy daughter.—I will not accept him as a husband for her, replied Shems-ed-Din ; and if I were not purposing a journey, I would do to thee deeds that should serve as warnings to others : however, when I return, God will do what He willeth.—When Nur-ed-Din heard this, he was full of anger, and became unconscious of existence : but he concealed his feelings ; and each of the two brothers passed the night apart from the other ; and in the morning the Sultan set out on his journey, and, crossing over to the island, proceeded towards the Pyramids, accompanied by the Wezir Shems-ed-Din.

Nur-ed-Din passed that night in a state of the utmost rage ; and when the morning came he arose, and, having performed the morning-prayers, went to his closet and took out from it a pair of small saddle-bags, which he filled with gold ; and as he reflected upon the words of his brother, and the contempt which he had shewn him, and the pride that he had manifested towards him, he repeated these verses :—

Travel. Thou wilt find a friend in the place of him thou leavest ;
and fatigue thyself ; for by labour are the sweets of life obtained.

To a man of intelligence and education there is no glory in a constant residence : therefore quit thy native place, and go abroad.

I have observed that the stagnation of water corrupteth it : if it floweth, it becometh sweet ; but otherwise, it doth not.

If the full moon never set, the eye of the contemplative would not on every occasion pay regard to it :

The lions, if they left not the forest, would capture no prey ; and the arrow, if it quitted not the bow, would not strike the mark :

The grains of gold upon their native bed are regarded as mere dust ; and the aloës-wood, where it groweth, is a kind of firewood :

If exported, it becometh an object of high demand ; but if not, it attaineth no kind of distinction.

He then ordered one of his young men to saddle for him a dapple mule, tall, and of quick pace ; and he did so, placing upon her a saddle adorned with gold, with stirrups of Indian steel, and housings of the velvet of Ispahan ; and she resembled a bride displayed before her husband. He ordered him also to place upon her a carpet of silk, and a prayer-carpet, and to put the saddle-bags beneath the latter ;

and when this was done, he said to the young man and the slaves, I have a desire to take a ride for my amusement outside the city, towards the province of Kalyub, and shall be absent three nights ; and let none of you follow me, for my heart is contracted.

Having thus said, he mounted his mule in haste, and, taking with him a small supply of food, departed from the city, turning his face towards the open country. The hour of noon overtook him not until he entered the city of Bilbeys, where he alighted to repose himself and rest his mule, and ate ; after which he took from this place what he required for himself, and some provender for his mule, and, having placed these provisions upon her, went forth again into the plain, and before noon on the second following day he entered Jerusalem. Here he alighted again, and rested himself and his beast, and ate : he then placed his saddle-bags under his head, and spread his carpet, and slept, still overcome by anger. He passed the night in this place ; and in the morning he remounted, and he continued to urge on his mule until he arrived at Aleppo, where he alighted at a Khan, and remained three days to give rest to himself and his mule, and to enjoy the air of the place : which having done, he determined to prosecute his journey, and mounted his mule, and went forth. He knew not whither to direct his course ; but travelled on until he arrived at the city of El-Basrah ; and scarcely was he aware that the night had overtaken him, when he alighted there at a Khan, where he took off the saddle-bags from the mule, and spread the prayer-carpet, committing the mule, with her equipage, to the care of the door-keeper, and ordering him to walk her about a little.

The door-keeper did so ; and it happened that the Wezir of El-Basrah, sitting at a window of his palace, saw the mule, and, observing her costly equipage, thought that she must belong to some Wezir or King ; and as he attentively regarded her he was surprised, and said to one of his pages, Bring before me that door-keeper. So the page went and brought him ; and the door-keeper, approaching, kissed the ground before him. The Wezir, who was an aged person, then said to this man, Who is the owner of this mule, and

what is his appearance?—O my lord, answered the door-keeper, her owner is a young man of elegant person, of the sons of the merchants, and of a dignified and grave aspect. On hearing this, the Wezir arose, and, mounting his horse, went to the Khan, and introduced himself to the young man, who, as soon as he saw him approaching, rose to meet him, and embraced him. The Wezir, after he had alighted from his horse, saluted him and welcomed him, and, seating him by his side, said to him, Whence, O my son, hast thou come; and for what purpose?—O my lord, answered Nur-ed-Din, I have come from the city of Cairo: my father was Wezir there; and he hath departed to receive the mercy of God;—and he informed him of all that had happened to him from first to last, adding, I have determined that I will not return until I shall have seen all the cities and countries of the world.—O my son, replied the Wezir, obey not the suggestions of thy mind, lest thou expose thyself to destruction; for the countries are waste, and I fear on thine account the issues of fortune. So saying, he ordered that the saddle-bags should be placed again on the mule, together with the carpet of silk and the prayer-carpet, and took Nur-ed-Din with him to his house, where he lodged him in an elegant apartment, and treated him with honour and kindness; and, conceiving a strong affection for him, said to him, O my son, I have become an old man, and I have no male child; God, however, hath blessed me with a daughter who resembleth thee in comeliness, and I have rejected many persons who have been her suitors: but now, love for thee hath entered my heart; wilt thou then take my daughter as thy hand-maid to serve thee, and be her husband? If thou consent to this, I will go up to the Sultan of El-Basrah, and will say to him, This is the son of my brother;—and I will introduce thee to him, that I may make thee Wezir in my place, and I will remain in my house; for I am now aged.—Nur-ed-Din, on hearing this proposal of the Wezir of El-Basrah, hung down his head, and then answered, I hear and obey.

The Wezir rejoiced at his assent, and ordered his servants to prepare for him a repast, and to decorate the great saloon which was furnished for the reception of the chiefs of the

Emirs. He then called together his friends, and invited the great officers of the state, and the merchants of El-Basrah ; and when they had come into his presence, he said to them, I had a brother who was Wezir in the land of Egypt, and God blessed him with two sons ; and me, as ye know, He hath blessed with a daughter : now my brother enjoined me to marry my daughter to one of his sons, and I consented to do so ; and when she attained a fit age for marriage, he sent to me one of his sons, who is this young man here present. As soon, therefore, as he had come, I desired to perform the marriage-contract between him and my daughter, and that he should introduce himself to her here in my house.—Excellently hast thou done ! they replied. They then drank sherbet of sugar, and the pages sprinkled rose-water upon them, and they departed : after which, the Wezir ordered his servants to conduct Nur-ed-Din to the bath, and gave him a suit of his best clothes, and sent to him the napkins and cups and perfuming-vessels, and everything else that he required. So when he came out from the bath, he put on the suit of clothes, and appeared like the full moon ; and he mounted his mule, and, returning to the palace, alighted and presented himself before the Wezir, and kissed his hand : and the Wezir welcomed him, saying, Arise, and introduce thyself this night to thy wife ; and to-morrow I will go up with thee to the Sultan, and I pray that God may bless thee with every kind of happiness. Nur-ed-Din therefore arose, and went to his wife, the daughter of the Wezir.—Thus did it happen to Nur-ed-Din.

As to his brother, he continued a while journeying with the Sultan, and when he returned, and found not his brother, he inquired of the servants respecting him, and they answered, On the day of thy departure with the Sultan, he mounted his mule, caparisoned as for a procession of state, and said, I am going towards the province of Kalyub, and shall be absent a day or two days ; for my heart is contracted ; therefore let none of you follow me :—and from the day on which he went forth, to the present day, we have heard no tidings of him. Upon this the heart of Shems-ed-Din was troubled at the separation of his brother, and he grieved excessively for his loss, saying within himself, The cause of

this is nothing else than my having spoken harshly to him in my conversation on the night before my departure with the Sultan ; and probably his mind was disturbed, and he went on a journey : I must therefore send after him. He then went up and related this event to the Sultan, who wrote letters and sent them to his vicegerents in all the provinces : but Nur-ed-Din had traversed distant regions during the absence of his brother with the Sultan : therefore the messengers, when they had gone with the letters, returned without having obtained any information respecting him. So Shems-ed-Din despaired of his brother, and said, I have enraged my brother by what I said to him concerning the marriage of the children. Would that I had not done so ! This was not occasioned but by my want of sense and judgment !—And soon after this, he demanded in marriage the daughter of one of the merchants of Cairo, and performed the marriage-contract between himself and her, and introduced himself to her : and it happened that the night when this event took place was the same night on which Nur-ed-Din introduced himself to his wife, the daughter of the Wezir of El-Basrah : this being in accordance with the will of God, whose name be exalted, that He might execute his decree upon his creatures.

The event was as they both had said : for it came to pass that the two wives conceived by them : the wife of Shems-ed-Din, the Wezir of Egypt, gave birth to a daughter, than whom there was not seen, in that country, one more beautiful ; and the wife of Nur-ed-Din gave birth to a son, one more beautiful than whom was not seen in his time : as the poet hath said :—

If beauty came to be compared with him, it would hang down its head in shame :

Or if it were said, O beauty, hast thou seen the like ?—it would answer, The equal of this I have not.

So they named him Hasan [Comely] ; and on the seventh day after his birth, they made entertainments and spread repasts such as were fit for the sons of Kings : after which the Wezir of El-Basrah took with him Nur-ed-Din, and went up with him to the Sultan ; and when he came into his

presence he kissed the ground before him ; and Nur-ed-Din, being eloquent in tongue, and firm of heart, and comely in person and in actions, recited these words of the poet :—

This is he whose justice extendeth to all men, and who hath overrun and subdued every region.

Be thankful for his benefits ; for they are not mere benefits ; but they are strings of jewels on the necks of his people :

And kiss his fingers ; for they are not mere fingers ; but they are the keys of the supplies of Providence.

The Sultan treated them both with honour, and, having thanked Nur-ed-Din for his address, said to his Wezir, Who is this young man ? The Wezir therefore related to him his story from beginning to end, and added, This is the son of my brother.—How is it, said the Sultan, that he is the son of thy brother, and we have not before heard of him ? The Wezir answered, O our lord the Sultan, I had a brother who was Wezir in the land of Egypt, and he died, leaving two sons : the elder succeeded to his father's office, as Wezir, and this his younger son came to me ; and I swore that I would not marry my daughter to any but him : so, when he came, I married him to her. He is a young man, and I am now aged ; my hearing is impaired, and my judgment faileth : it is my wish, therefore, that our lord the Sultan would instate him in my office, seeing that he is the son of my brother and the husband of my daughter, and a person worthy of the dignity of Wezir ; for he is endowed with knowledge and judgment.—The Sultan, upon this, looked towards him, and, being pleased with him, approved of the advice of the Wezir that he should promote him to that office ; so he bestowed it upon him, and ordered that a magnificent dress of honour should be given to him, and one of the best of the mules upon which he was himself accustomed to ride, allotting him also supplies and salaries ; and Nur-ed-Din kissed the hand of the Sultan, and descended with his father-in-law to their house, both in high delight, and saying, Verily the birth of this child is fortunate. On the following day Nur-ed-Din went again to the King, and kissed the ground, and the Sultan ordered him to sit in the place of the Wezir : so he sat, and occupied himself with

the affairs of his office, and examined the cases of the people, and their suits, according to the custom of Wezirs: and the Sultan, observing him, was surprised at his conduct, and the acuteness of his understanding, and his good judgment. He attentively considered his qualities, and loved him, and advanced him in his favour: and when the court was dissolved, Nur-ed-Din returned to his house, and related what had passed to his father-in-law, who was rejoiced at hearing it.

The old Wezir ceased not to superintend the rearing of the child, who was named Hasan, for many days, while Nur-ed-Din was constantly occupied with the affairs of his office, so that he left not the Sultan by day nor by night; and the King increased his salaries and supplies until his circumstances became ample: he had ships which made voyages under his orders with merchandise and other things, and he founded numerous estates, and made water-wheels and gardens. Thus did he until his son Hasan was four years of age, when the old Wezir, the father of his wife, died; and he conveyed his corpse with great pomp, and decently deposited it in the earth. He then turned his thoughts towards the education of his son; and when the child had gained strength, he brought him a tutor to teach him in his own house, charging him to instruct him and educate him well; and the tutor did so, and taught him various useful sciences, after he had passed some years in learning the Kur'an. Hasan meanwhile increased in loveliness and beauty, and elegance of person. The tutor continued to educate him in his father's palace; and from the time that he arrived at adolescence he went not out of the Wezir's palace, until his father took him one day, and, having clad him in one of the richest of his dresses, mounted him on one of his best mules, and conducted him to the Sultan, and introduced him. When the King beheld Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, the son of the Wezir Nur-ed-Din, he was astonished at his beauty; and the people, when he passed by them for the first time, going up with his father to the King, were amazed at his surpassing beauty and loveliness, and elegance of person. The Sultan, as soon as he saw him, loved him, and bestowed marks of favour upon

him, and said to his father, O Wezir, thou must bring him with thee every day. The Wezir answered, I hear and obey ;—and returned with his son to his abode ; and he continued every day to go up with him to the Sultan until the youth attained the age of fifteen years.

His father, the Wezir Nur-ed-Din, then fell sick, and called him into his presence, and said to him, O my son, know that this world is a perishable abode, and the world to come is an everlasting abode. I wish to give thee some precepts, and do thou understand what I am about to say to thee, and incline thy heart to it.—And he began to counsel him respecting the proper mode of conducting himself in society, and the due management of his affairs ; and when he had done so, he reflected upon his brother and his native place and country, and wept at the thought of his separation from those he loved ; his tears flowing : and he said, O my son, hear my words. I have a brother⁴³ in Cairo, and I quitted him and departed against his will.—He then took a piece of paper, and wrote upon it all that had happened to him from first to last, together with the date of his marriage and introduction to the daughter of the Wezir, and the date of his arrival at El-Basrah and his interview with its Wezir ; and, having added some strict admonition, he said to his son, Keep this charge, for the paper on which it is written containeth an account of thine origin and thy rank and lineage ; and if any evil accident befall thee, repair to Cairo, and inquire for thine uncle, and salute him, and inform him that I died in a strange land, ardently desiring that I could see him. Therefore Hasan Bedr-ed-Din took the paper, and, having folded it, and wrapped it in a piece of waxed cloth, sewed it between the lining and the outer cloth [of his cap], and wept for his father, that he should be parted from him in his youth.

Nur-ed-Din⁴⁴ then said to his son, I charge thee that thou be not familiar with any one ; for in retirement is security. Divinely gifted was the poet who said,—

There is none in thy time whose friendship thou shouldst covet ; nor any intimate who, when fortune is treacherous, will be faithful. Live then apart, and rely upon no man : I have given thee, in these words, good advice, and sufficient.

Accustom thyself to taciturnity: occupy thyself with thine own affairs, and use not many words: for the poet saith,—

Taciturnity is an ornament, and in silence is security: therefore, when thou speakest, be not loquacious: For if thou repent once of thy silence, thou wilt assuredly repent many times of thy speech.

Beware of drinking wine; for it is the source of every kind of mischief. The poet* saith on this subject,—

I have abandoned wine and those who drink it; and have become the friend of such as condemn it.

Wine leadeth astray from the path of rectitude, and openeth the doors to evil.

Hate no man, and oppress none; for oppression is base. The poet saith,—

Oppress not if thou hast the power to do so; for oppression will eventually bring thee repentance:

Thine eye will sleep while the oppressed, wakeful, will call for vengeance upon thee; and the eye of God sleepeth not.

Despise thy wealth, but not thyself: yet bestow not wealth save upon him who deserveth it. If thou keep it, it will keep thee; but if thou squander it, it will ruin thee; and then wilt thou need the assistance of the least of mankind. It hath been said by the poet,—

When my wealth faileth, no friend assisteth me; but when it aboundeth, all men are my friends.

How many enemies for the sake of wealth have consorted with me! And my companion, in the time of want, hath abandoned me!

In this manner he continued to admonish his son Hasan Bedr-ed-Din until his spirit departed. The house became a scene of mourning, and the Sultan and all the Emirs grieved for him; and they buried him. They continued their mourning during a period of two months, and the son of Nur-ed-Din rode not out nor went to the court nor presented himself before the Sultan; and the King instated one of the Chamberlains in his place, and appointed a new Wezir in the place of his father, and ordered this Wezir to put seals upon all the houses of Nur-ed-Din, and upon his wealth and

* El-Mutanebbi.

all his buildings and other possessions. So the new Wezir went with the Chamberlains to the house of the Wezir Nur-ed-Din, to seal its door and to arrest his son Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, and bring him before the Sultan, that he might do to him what his judgment required. But there was among the troops one of the memluks of the deceased Wezir Nur-ed-Din; and he could not endure that the son of his master should be thus treated: he therefore repaired to Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, whom he found with downcast head and mourning heart, on account of the death of his father, and acquainted him with what had passed. Hasan asked him, Will the execution of the order be delayed long enough for me to enter my house, and take somewhat of my worldly possessions by which to obtain support during my exile? But the memluk answered, Save thyself:—and when Hasan heard these words, he covered his head with the skirt of his robe, and, going forth on foot, fled out of the city: and he heard the people saying, The Sultan hath sent the new Wezir to the house of the deceased Wezir, to seal his wealth and other possessions, and to arrest his son Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, and bring him before him that he may put him to death:—and the people were mourning for him on account of his beauty and loveliness. So when he heard what they said, he took a course that he had not intended, and, not knowing whither to go, walked on until destiny urged him to the tomb of his father.

Entering the burial-ground, he bent his way among the tombs until he seated himself at that of his father, where he removed his skirt from over his head. And as he was sitting there, a Jew of El-Basrah approached, and said to him, Wherefore, O my master, do I see thee thus changed? He answered, I was just now sleeping, and I beheld my father reproaching me for having failed to visit his tomb: wherefore I rose in alarm, fearing that the day would pass without my visiting it, and so the occurrence would distress me. The Jew then said to him, O my master, thy father despatched some vessels with merchandise, and some of them have returned; and it is my wish to purchase of thee the cargo of every vessel that hath arrived for a thousand pieces of gold:—and so saying, he took out a purse filled

with gold, and counted out from it a thousand pieces, which he paid to Hasan the son of the Wezir, and said to him, Write me a paper, and seal it. So Hasan took a paper, and wrote upon it, The writer of this paper, Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, the son of the Wezir Nur-ed-Din, hath sold to the Jew such a one the whole cargo of every one of his father's vessels that hath returned from her voyage, for a thousand pieces of gold, and hath received the price in advance. And after he had taken a copy⁴⁸ of it, the Jew went away with the paper; and Hasan wept, reflecting upon his former state of dignity and favour. At length the night closed in upon him, and sleep overtook him, and he remained asleep at his father's tomb until the moon rose, when his head rolled from the tomb, and he lay and slept on his back, his face shining in the moonlight.

Now the burial-ground was inhabited by believing Jinn; and a Jinniyeh, coming forth, saw the face of Hasan as he lay asleep, and, when she beheld him, was surprised at his beauty and loveliness, and exclaimed, Extolled be Allah's perfection! This youth is like none but the virgins of paradise!—She then soared into the air, to perform her accustomed circuits, and saw an 'Efrit on his flight. She saluted him, and he returned her salutation; and she said to him, Whence comest thou? He answered, From Cairo:—and she said to him, Wilt thou go with me to behold the beauty of the youth who is sleeping in the burial-ground? He replied, Yes. So they went together; and when they had descended into the burial-ground, she said to him, Hast thou seen in the course of thy life a person like this?—And the 'Efrit looked upon him, and exclaimed, Extolled be the perfection of Him unto whom none is to be compared! But, O my sister, he added, if thou desire, I will relate to thee what I have seen.—Tell me, she replied: so he said, I have seen a person resembling this youth in the land of Egypt; and that person is the daughter of the Wezir. The King had heard of her, and demanded her of her father, the Wezir Shems-ed-Din, in marriage; but he answered him, O our lord the Sultan, accept my excuse, and pity my grief; for thou knowest that my brother Nur-ed-Din departed from us, and we know not where he is; and that he shared with

me the office of Wezir; and the cause of his departure was this, that I was sitting conversing with him on the subject of marriage, and he was angry with me, and in anger went away:—and he related to the King all that had passed between them; adding, This was the cause of his indignation, and I have been under an oath that I will not marry my daughter to any but the son of my brother from the day that her mother gave birth to her; and that was about fifteen years ago: and lately I heard that my brother had married the daughter of the Wezir of El-Basrah, and obtained a son by her; and I will not marry my daughter to any but him, in honour of my brother. After I had heard this, I recorded the date of my marriage, and of my wife's conception, and of the birth of this daughter: she is intended for the son of her uncle; and of other maidens there are plenty.—But when the Sultan heard these words of the Wezir, he was violently enraged, and said, How is it that such a one as myself demandeth in marriage a daughter from one like thee, and thou withholdest her from him, and excusest thyself by an absurd pretext? By my head, I will not marry her but to one of less consideration than myself, in scorn of thy pride!—And the King had a humpbacked groom, with a hump before and a hump behind; and he ordered him to be brought, and affianced him to the daughter of the Wezir, commanding that he should introduce himself to her this night, and be conducted in pompous procession. I left him in the midst of the memluks of the Sultan, who were surrounding him with lighted candles in their hands, laughing at him and mocking him, at the door of the bath, while the daughter of the Wezir was sitting weeping in the midst of the dye-women and tire-women.⁴⁸ She resembles more than any other person this youth. They have prohibited her father from going to her; and I have never seen, O my sister, a more ugly wretch than this humpback: but as to the maiden, she is more beautiful than this youth.

To this story of the 'Efrit, the Jinniyeh answered, Thou liest; for this youth is the most beautiful of the people of his age. But the 'Efrit replied, By Allah, O my sister, the maiden is more beautiful than he: however, none but he is suited to her; for they resemble each other, and probably

are brother and sister, or cousins; and how will she be thrown away upon this humpback! She therefore said to him, O my brother, let us place ourselves beneath him and lift him up and take him to the maiden of whom thou speakest, and see which of the two is the more beautiful. The 'Efrit answered, I hear and obey: this proposal is right, and there can be no better determination than this which thou hast chosen; therefore I will carry him. So he lifted him up, and soared into the sky, and the Jinniyeh flew by his side until he descended with him in the city of Cairo, where he placed him upon a mastabah,* and roused him from his sleep.

When, therefore, he awoke, and found that he was not at his father's tomb in the land of El-Basrah, he looked to the right and left, and perceived that he was in a city that was not El-Basrah, and would have cried out; but the 'Efrit winked to him, and, lighting for him a candle, said to him, Know that I have brought thee hither, and I desire to do thee a service for the sake of God: take, therefore, this candle, and go with it to yonder bath, and mix with the people there, and proceed with them until thou arrivest at the saloon of the bride; then go before, and enter the saloon, and fear no one; and when thou hast entered, station thyself on the right of the humpbacked bridegroom; and whenever the tire-women and singing-women and dye-women come to thee, put thy hand into thy pocket: thou wilt find it full of gold, and do thou take it by the handful and throw it to them; and imagine not that thou wilt put thy hand in and not find it filled with gold: give therefore to every one who cometh to thee by the handful, and fear nothing; but rely upon Him who created thee; for this will not be through thine own strength or power, but through the strength of God, and his power.

On hearing these words of the 'Efrit, Hasan Bedr-ed-Din said, What is this event, and what manner of kindness is this? And he went with his cradle to the bath, where he found the humpback mounted on his horse; and he joined himself to the party, in the same garb in which he had arrived, and with the same comely appearance; being

* Stone bench before a shop or house.

attired with a tarbush * and turban, and a farajiyeh † interwoven with gold. He proceeded with the pompous train, and every time that the singing-women stopped for the people to give them money, he put his hand into his pocket, and found it filled with gold, and took it by the handful and threw it into the tambourine, for the singing-women and tire-women, filling the tambourine with pieces of gold: and the singing-women were amazed, and the people wondered at his beauty and loveliness. Thus he continued to do until they arrived at the house of the Wezir, when the chamberlains drove back the people, and prevented their entrance; but the singing-women and tire-women said, By Allah, we will not enter unless this youth enter with us, for he hath overwhelmed us with his favours, and the bride shall not be displayed unless he be present:— and upon this they entered with him into the saloon of the festivity, and seated him, in spite of the humpbacked bridegroom. All the ladies of the Emirs and Wezirs and Chamberlains were ranged in two rows, each lady holding a large lighted candle, and having her head-veil drawn across the lower part of her face: thus they stood in two rows, to the right and the left, from the foot of the couch of the bride to the upper end of the liwan that adjoined the chamber from which the bride was to come forth. And when the ladies beheld Hasan Bedr-ed-Din and his beauty and loveliness, his face shining like the crescent of the moon, the hearts of all of them inclined to him, and the female singers said to all the women who were present, Know that this charming youth hath given us nothing but red gold; therefore fail not to serve him properly, and obey him in whatever he shall say. The women crowded round him to gaze at his charms, and their minds were overpowered by astonishment at his beauty, and each of them wished that she might be in his bosom for a year or a month or an hour: they removed the veils from their faces, and their hearts were perplexed, and they said, Joy to the person to whom this youth belongeth, or to the person over whom he is lord! Then they imprecated evil upon the

* In Turkish, fes [fez].

† A long-sleeved loose coat.

humpbacked groom and him who was the cause of his marriage to that lovely maiden ; and every time that they prayed for blessings upon Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, they imprecated misfortunes upon the humpback.

The singing-women then beat the tambourines, and the tire-women approached with the daughter of the Wezir in the midst of them. They had perfumed her with sweet scents and essences, and clad her, and adorned her hair and neck with various ornaments, decking her with garments such as were worn by the ancient monarchs of Persia. Among these was a loose gown embroidered with red gold, presenting the forms of wild beasts and birds, hanging down over her other clothes ; and round her neck was a necklace worth thousands, composed of jewels such as neither a King of El-Yemen nor a Cæsar ever collected : she was like the moon shining in its fourteenth night, and when she approached she resembled a Huriyeh. Extolled be the perfection of Him who created her so splendid a being ! The women encompassed her, and appeared like stars ; she, in the midst of them, being as the moon when the clouds have withdrawn from before it. Meanwhile, Hasan Bedr-ed-Din remained sitting, with the company gazing at him ; and as the bride approached with a dignified and graceful gait, the humpbacked groom rose to her, to kiss her ; but she turned aside from him, and went and stood before Hasan, the son of her uncle. The company laughed at this ; and when they beheld her turn towards Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, and saw him put his hand into his pocket and take out handfuls of gold and throw it into the tambourine of the singing-women, they were delighted, and said, We wish that this bride were thine :—and he smiled. All this time the humpbacked groom was alone, looking like an ape ; and every time that they lighted his candle it went out again, and he was confounded, and remained sitting in the dark, full of secret indignation, with all the company surrounding him, while the lighted candles presented an appearance of beauty that was most admirable, so that every person of reflection was amazed at their splendour. But as to the bride, she raised her hands towards heaven, and said, O Allah, make this to be my husband, and relieve

me from this humpbacked groom!—The tire-women then proceeded to display the bride in different dresses, to the seventh suit, before Hasan Bedr-ed-Din of El-Basrah, the humpbacked groom remaining alone; and when they had finished this ceremony they gave permission to the company to depart: so all who were present at the festivity, both women and children, went out, except Hasan Bedr-ed-Din and the humpbacked groom; after which the tire-women conducted the bride to an inner chamber, to take off her ornaments and outer robes, and to prepare her for the bridegroom's visit.

Upon this, the humpbacked groom approached Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, and said to him, O my master, thou hast made us happy by thy company this night, and overwhelmed us with thy favours; but now wherefore dost thou not rise and go to thy house without thy being ejected? He answered, In the name of Allah;—and rose, and went out from the door: but the 'Efrit met him, and said unto him, Stay, O Bedr-ed-Din; and when the humpback retires into the private closet, enter thou and seat thyself in the bride-chamber; and when the bride cometh, say to her, I am thy husband; and the King had not recourse to this stratagem from any other motive than his fearing for thee the effect of the eye; and this whom thou hast seen is one of our grooms:—then approach her, and uncover her face, and fear no evil from any one.

While Bedr-ed-Din was thus conversing with the 'Efrit, lo, the groom entered the closet, and seated himself; and immediately the 'Efrit rose before him, from the trough of water that was in the closet, in the form of a mouse, and cried Zik!—What brought thee here? said the humpback. The mouse then increased in size, and became like a cat; and then increased, and became a dog, and cried, 'Awh! 'Awh! At the sight of this the groom was terrified, and exclaimed, Get away, thou unlucky! The dog, however, still increased and swelled until it became an ass, and brayed in his face, crying, Hak! Hak!—upon which the groom, in terror, cried out, Come to my aid, O people of the house! But lo, the ass increased, and became like a buffalo, and, stopping up the place before him, spoke with

the speech of a son of Adam, and said, Wo be to thee, O humpback ! O filthiest of grooms !—Upon this the groom was seized with a colic, and seated himself upon the slabs, and his teeth knocked together. The 'Efrit then said to him, Hath the earth become narrow to thee, that thou wouldest marry none but my mistress ? But the groom was silent. Return me an answer, said the 'Efrit, or I will make thine abode to be in the dust !—By Allah, then answered the groom, I am not in fault ; for they compelled me, and I knew not that she had a lover among the buffaloes ; but now I repent before Allah and before thee. Then the 'Efrit said, I swear by Allah that if thou depart now from this place, or utter a word before the sun hath risen, I will slay thee : and when the sun hath risen go thy way, and never return to this house. And he seized the humpbacked groom, and, placing his head upside down upon the slabs, and his feet upwards, said to him, Remain here, and I will watch thee until sunrise.—Thus did it happen to the humpback.

Now, as to Hasan Bedr-ed-Din of El-Basrah, he left the humpback and the 'Efrit contending together, and, entering the house, seated himself in the bride-chamber ; and lo, the bride approached, accompanied by an old woman, who stopped at the door of the chamber, and said, O Abu-Shihab,* rise, and take thy bride ; and I commend thee to the care of Allah. Then the old woman went away, and the bride, whose name was Sitt-el-Hosn, advanced to the upper end of the chamber. Her heart was broken, and she said within herself, By Allah, I will not suffer him to caress me though my spirit depart from me ! But when she had proceeded to the upper end of the chamber, she beheld Bedr-ed-Din, and said, My beloved, until this hour art thou remaining ? I had said within myself, perhaps thou and the humpbacked groom are to share me between you.—What, said he, should give the groom access to thee, and wherefore should he be my partner in the possession of thee ?—Who, then, she asked, is my husband ? Thou or he ?—O my mistress, answered Bedr-ed-Din, we did not this for any other purpose than to make a jest of him, and

* "Father of a Shooting-Star," a nickname for a devil.

that we might laugh at him ; for when the tire-women and the singing-women and thy family beheld thine admirable beauty, they feared for us the effect of the [evil] eye, and thy father hired him for ten pieces of gold, in order that he might divert from us the eye ; and now he hath departed. When Sitt-el-Hosn heard these words of Bedr-ed-Din, she smiled, and uttered a gentle laugh, and said, By Allah, thou hast extinguished my fire ! Take me then, I conjure thee, and press me to thy bosom.—And they embraced each other.

Not long after this, the 'Efrit said to the Jinniyeh, Arise, and place thyself beneath the youth, and let us convey him back, lest the morning overtake us ; for the time is near. So she advanced towards him, and, placing herself beneath his skirt, as he lay asleep, took him up, and flew away with him, in the state in which she found him, clad only in his shirt, and pursued her flight with the 'Efrit by her side. But God gave permission to some angels to cast at the 'Efrit a shooting-star of fire, and he was burnt. The Jinniyeh, however, escaped unhurt, and deposited Bedr-ed-Din in the place over which the shooting-star had burnt the 'Efrit. She would not pass beyond it, fearing for his safety ; and as destiny had appointed, this place was Damascus : so she placed him by one of the gates of this city, and flew away.

When daylight therefore came, and the gates were opened, the people, coming forth, beheld a beautiful youth clad in his shirt, and with a cotton skull-cap without a turban. In consequence of his having been so long wakeful, he was now immersed in sleep ; and when the people saw him, some said, Would that he had waited till he had put on his clothes !—another said, Objects of pity are the children of men of condition ! Probably this youth hath just come forth from his drinking-place, on account of some business, and intoxication hath overcome him, and he hath wandered from the place to which he would go until he arrived at the gate of the city, and, finding it locked, hath slept here.—They had expressed various opinions respecting him, and were wondering at his case, when Bedr-ed-Din awoke. Perceiving that he was at the gate of a city, and surrounded by men, he was astonished, and said, Where am I, O good people ; and what is the cause of your assembling around me, and what

hath befallen me among you? They answered, We saw thee at the call to morning-prayer lying at this gate asleep; and we know nothing more of thy case. Were wast thou sleeping this last night?—By Allah, O people, he replied, I was sleeping this last night in Cairo.—On hearing this, one of them said, Dost thou eat hashish? Another said, Thou art mad. How couldst thou be passing the night in Cairo, and be sleeping in the morning at the city of Damascus?—He said to them, By Allah, O good people, I will tell you no falsehood: I was last night in the land of Egypt, and the day before I was at El-Basrah. One of them said, This is a wonderful thing! Another said, This youth is mad. And they clapped their hands at him, and, conversing together, said, Alas, for his youth! By Allah, there is no denying his madness!—They then said to him, Return to thy reason. But he replied, I was yesterday a bridegroom in the land of Egypt.—Probably thou hast dreamt, said they, and hast seen this of which thou speakest in thy sleep. And Hasan was confounded, and said, By Allah, this was not a dream: and where is the humpbacked groom who was sitting with us, and the purse of gold that I had? And where are my clothes and my drawers?—He then rose, and entered the city, and proceeded through its great thoroughfare-streets and market-streets; and the people crowded round him and paraded him: so he entered the shop of a cook. Now this cook was a robber,⁴⁷ whom God had caused to repent of his unlawful actions, and he had opened a cook's shop; and all the people of Damascus feared him on account of his boldness; therefore, when they saw that the youth had entered this shop, they left him, being afraid.

When the cook beheld Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, and observed his beauty and comeliness, love for him entered his heart, and he said to him, Whence art thou, O young man? Relate to me thy story; for thou art become dearer to me than my soul.—So he related to him all that had happened, from beginning to end: and the cook said to him, O my master Bedr-ed-Din, know that this is a wonderful event and an extraordinary story; but, O my son, conceal thy case until God dispel thy trouble, and remain with me in this place; and as I have not a son, I will adopt thee as such.

Bedr-ed-Din replied, Let it be as thou desirest, O uncle. And immediately the cook went out to the mart, and bought for Bedr-ed-Din costly clothes, and put them on him : he then went to the Kadi, and made a declaration that he was his adopted son : so Hasan Bedr-ed-Din became known throughout the city of Damascus as the son of the cook ; and he sat with him in the shop to receive the money, and in this situation he remained.

Now as to Sitt-el-Hosn, when daybreak came and she awoke, she found not Hasan Bedr-ed-Din remaining with her, and, imagining that he would soon return, she sat a while expecting him ; and lo, her father came in to her, troubled at that which had befallen him from the Sultan, and at his having married his daughter by force to one of his servants, the humpbacked groom ; and he said within himself, I will kill this girl if she have suffered the wretch to caress her. So he advanced to the bride-chamber, and, stopping at the door, said, O Sitt-el-Hosn ! She answered, Well, O my master !—and came forth to him, walking with a vacillating gait, through joy, and kissed the ground before him ; and her countenance beamed with increased splendour in consequence of her union with that gazelle. When her father, therefore, saw her in this state, he exclaimed to her, O thou base creature ! art thou delighted with this groom ? On hearing these words of her father, Sitt-el-Hosn smiled, and replied, By Allah, it is enough that thou hast done, and that the people laugh at me, and put me on an equality with this groom, who is not, in my estimation, of the value of a paring of one of my finger-nails ; but as to my husband—by Allah, I never in the course of my life passed a night more delightful than that which I have just passed in his company : therefore jest not with me by mentioning that humpback.—When her father heard what she said he was filled with rage ; his eyes glared so that little appeared of them but the white, and he said to her, Wo to thee ! What are these words that thou sayest ? Verily the humpbacked groom hath passed the night with thee !—I conjure thee by Allah, she rejoined, that thou mention him not. May Allah reject him, and reject his father ! Continue not then to mock me by mentioning him ; for the groom was only hired for ten pieces of

gold, and he took his hire and departed; and I came and entered the bride-chamber, and beheld my husband seated, after the singing-women had displayed me before him; and he threw them red gold until he had enriched the poor who were present. I have reclined upon the bosom of my gentle-hearted husband, with the black eyes and the joined eyebrows.—When her father heard this, the light became darkness before his face, and he exclaimed to her, O thou abandoned one! What is this that thou sayest? Where is thy reason?—O my father, she replied, thou hast broken my heart in pieces! Wherefore dost thou pay no attention? This of whom I spake is my husband, and he hath retired to his private closet.

So her father went thither, in a state of astonishment, and, entering the closet, found the humpbacked groom with his head upon the slabs and his feet turned upwards; and the Wezir was confounded at the sight, and said, Is not this the humpback?—and he spoke to him; but the humpback returned no answer, thinking that it was the 'Efrit who addressed him. The Wezir, therefore, cried out at him with a loud voice, and said to him, Speak, or I will cut off thy head with this sword! Upon which the humpback exclaimed, By Allah, O sheykh of the 'Efrits, from the time that thou placedst me here I have not raised my head: I conjure thee therefore that thou shew favour to me!—The Wezir, on hearing the humpback thus address him, said to him, What sayest thou? I am the father of the bride, and I am not an 'Efrit.—Then said the humpback, My life is not in thy hand, nor art thou able to take my soul; so go thy way before he come to thee who hath treated me in this manner. Ye would not marry me to any but the mistress of buffaloes and the mistress of 'Efrits! May Allah, then, confound him who married me to her, and confound him who was the cause of it!—Then did the humpbacked groom address the Wezir, the father of the bride, again, saying, Allah confound him who was the cause of this!—Rise, said the Wezir, and depart from this place.—Am I mad, he replied, that I should go with thee without the permission of the 'Efrit? For he said to me, When the sun shall have risen go thy way.—Hath the sun then risen or not? For I

cannot depart from my place until the sun hath risen.—Upon this the Wezir said to him, Who brought thee to this place? He answered, I came hither yesterday, and a dust rose from the midst of the water, and cried out, and increased in bulk until it became of the size of a buffalo, and said to me words that entered my ear. Leave me, therefore, and go. Allah confound the bride and him who married me to her!—The Wezir then approached him, and dragged him forth, and he went out running, doubting whether the sun had risen, and went up to the Sultan, and informed him of that which had happened to him with the 'Efrit.

But as to the Wezir, the father of the bride, he returned with his reason perplexed respecting the case of his daughter, and said to her, O my daughter, reveal to me thy story. She replied, The elegant person before whom I was displayed remained with me; and if thou believe me not, see this is his turban, twisted just as it was, upon the chair, and his drawers are under the bed, and in them is something wrapped up: I know not what it is. So, when her father heard this, he entered the bride-chamber, and found the turban of Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, the son of his brother; and taking it up, he turned it over, and said, This is such a turban as is worn by Wezirs, except that it is of the Mosili kind. He then observed an amulet sewed in his red cloth cap; and he unsewed it; and he took the drawers, and found the purse containing the thousand pieces of gold, and, opening this, he discovered in it a paper, which, when he had read it, he saw to be a copy of the Jew's contract, with the name of Hasan Bedr-ed-Din the son of Nur-ed-Din of Cairo; and he found also the thousand pieces of gold. But when he read the paper he cried aloud and fell down in a swoon; and as soon as he recovered, and understood the case, he was astonished, and exclaimed, There is no deity but God, who is able to do whatsoever He willeth! Then said he, O my daughter, knowest thou who hath become thy husband? She answered, No.—He is the son of my brother, said he, and the son of thine uncle; and these thousand pieces of gold are thy dowry. Extolled be the perfection of God! Would that I knew how this event hath happened!—Then he opened the amulet that was sewed up,

and found in it a paper written by the hand of his brother Nur-ed-Din of Cairo, the father of Hasan Bedr-ed-Din : and when he beheld the hand-writing of his brother he repeated this couplet :—

I behold their footsteps, and melt with desire, and pour forth my tears upon the places they have trodden,
Begging of Him who hath afflicted me by their separation, that He will bless me some day by a reunion.

So saying, he read the paper, and found in it the date of his marriage to the daughter of the Wezir of El-Basrah, and that of his first introduction to her, and a record of his age at the time of his death, and the date of the birth of his son Hasan Bedr-ed-Din ; and he wondered, and shook with delight ; and, comparing what had happened to his brother with the events that had happened to himself, he found that they corresponded exactly : his marriage and the marriage of his brother agreed in date, and their first visits to their respective wives in like manner ; as also the birth of Bedr-ed-Din, the son of his brother, and the birth of his daughter Sitt-el-Hosn. He took the two papers, and, going up with them to the Sultan, he acquainted him with all that had happened from the first of the case to the last ; and the King was astonished, and ordered that the case should be immediately recorded. The Wezir then remained in expectation of the son of his brother ; but he met with no tidings of him : so he said, By Allah, I will do a deed that none hath done before me :—and he took an ink-case and a pen, and wrote an inventory of the furniture of the house, describing the money-chest as having been in such a place, and a certain curtain in such another place, and everything in the house in like manner ; and he folded up the paper, and ordered that all the furniture should be stored up ; and he took the turban with its tarbush, and also the farajiyeh and the purse, and kept them himself.

After this, in due time, the daughter of the Wezir gave birth to a son like the moon, resembling his father in beauty and symmetry and splendour and loveliness. They received him from his mother, and blackened the edges of his eyes with kohl, and delivered him to the nurses, and named him

'Ajib. His day was as a month ; and his month, as a year ; and when seven years had passed over him, his grandfather committed him to a schoolmaster, whom he charged to educate him with great care. He continued at the school four years, and used to fight with his schoolfellows, and abuse them, saying to them, Who among you is like me ? I am the son of the Wezir of Cairo.—So the boys went together to complain to the monitor of that which they suffered from 'Ajib ; and the monitor said to them, I will teach you something to say to him when he cometh, and he shall repent of his coming to the school ; and it is this : to-morrow, when he is come, seat yourselves around him, and say one to another, By Allah, none shall play with us at this game excepting him who shall tell us the name of his mother and that of his father ; and he who knoweth not the name of his mother and that of his father is illegitimate ; therefore he shall not play with us. Accordingly, on the following morning they came to the school, and 'Ajib was there ; and the boys surrounded him, and said as the monitor had directed them, and they all agreed to the proposal ; and one said, My name is Majid, and my mother is 'Alawi, and my father is 'Izz-ed-Din :—then another said after the same manner, and another, and so on, until the turn came to 'Ajib ; and he said to them, My name is 'Ajib, and my mother is Sitt-el-Hosn, and my father is Shems-ed-Din, the Wezir of Cairo :—and they said to him, By Allah, the Wezir is not thy father. 'Ajib replied, the Wezir is my father indeed :—and upon this the boys laughed at him, and clapped their hands at him, saying, Thou knowest not who is thy father : get away from us, therefore ; for none shall play with us excepting him who knoweth the name of his father :—and immediately the boys dispersed from around him, and made a jest of him. In consequence of this treatment his heart became contracted, and he was almost choked with crying ; and the monitor said to him, Dost thou really consider as thy father him who is thy grandfather, the Wezir, the father of thy mother Sitt-el-Hosn ? Thy father thou knowest not, nor do we know him ; for the Sultan married her to the humpbacked groom, and the Jinn came and prevented him : so, if thou know not thy father,

they will regard thee among them as illegitimate. Dost thou not see that the son of the woman who is coveted as a wife knoweth his father? The Wezir of Cairo is thy grandfather; and as to thy father, we know him not, nor dost thou: return therefore to thy reason.

Upon this, 'Ajib went immediately to his mother, Sitt-el-Hosn, and complained to her, and wept; and his weeping prevented his speaking: and when his mother heard his complaint and his crying, her heart was inflamed for him, and she said to him, O my son, what maketh thee weep? Tell me thy story.—So he told her what he had heard from the boys and from the monitor, and said to her, O my mother, who is my father? She answered him, Thy father is the Wezir of Cairo. But he said, He is not my father: tell me not, therefore, what is false; for the Wezir is thy father; not mine: who then is my father? If thou do not tell me truly, I will kill myself with this dagger.—And when his mother heard the mention of his father, she wept at the allusion to the son of her uncle, and, remembering the amiable qualities of Hasan Bedr-ed-Din of El-Basrah, and what had happened to herself and him, she recited an ode commencing thus:—

They excited love in my heart, and departed; and far distant hath
their abode become!

Reason forsook me when they withdrew, and sleep and patience
abandoned me.

And she wept and cried out, and her son did the same; and lo, the Wezir entered. His heart burned within him when he beheld their state, and he said to them, What causeth you to weep? She acquainted him therefore with the treatment that her son had experienced from the other boys of the school; and he, also, wept, and called to mind what had happened to his brother and himself and his daughter, and he knew not the mystery of the case. Then suddenly he arose, and, going up to the council-chamber, presented himself before the King, and related to him the story, begging his permission to travel eastwards to the city of El-Basrah, that he might make inquiries respecting the son of his brother; and requesting also of the Sultan that he would

write letters for him to all the countries through which he might pass, that, if he found the son of his brother in any place, he might take him away. And he wept before the Sultan, and the heart of the King was moved with compassion for him, and he wrote for him letters to all the regions and countries ; upon which the Wezir rejoiced, and, having offered up a prayer for the Sultan, took leave of him.

He descended immediately and prepared for the journey, and, taking with him all that he required, together with his daughter and her son 'Ajib, travelled the first day and the second and the third, and proceeded until he arrived at the city of Damascus, and beheld it with its trees and streams celebrated by the poets. He alighted in the open space called Meydan el-Hasba ; and, when he had pitched his tents, said to his servants, We will take rest here two days. So the servants entered the city to gratify their various desires ; one to sell, another to buy, a third to enter the bath, and a fourth to visit the mosque of the Beni-Umeyyeh, which hath not in the world its equal. 'Ajib also entered the city, accompanied by his eunuch, in order to amuse themselves ; and the eunuch walked behind 'Ajib, having in his hand a whip that would strike down a camel. And when the people of Damascus beheld 'Ajib, and his elegance of form and perfect beauty, and observed him to be endowed with admirable loveliness, and with kindness of manner, more bland than the northern zephyr, sweeter than limpid water to the thirsty, and more pleasant than health to the diseased, they followed him, running after him in crowds ; and some sat waiting in the streets to see him pass. Thus did they until the slave, as destiny had ordained, stopped before the shop of 'Ajib's father, Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, in which the cook who had acknowledged him as his adopted son in the presence of the Kadis and witnesses had established him ; and this cook had died, and left him all his property, together with his shop.⁴⁵

When the slave stopped there on this day, the servants also stopped with him ; and Hasan Bedr-ed-Din beheld his son, and was charmed with him, observing his extreme beauty : his soul yearned towards him with natural sympathy, and his heart clung to him. He had just prepared a

conserve of pomegranate-grains, sweetened with sugar ; and the affection divinely inspired increased in him ; so he called out in ecstasy, and said, O my master, O thou who hast captivated my heart and soul, and to whom my affections are drawn by sympathy ! wilt thou come in to me and refresh my heart and eat of my food ? And when he had said this, his eyes overflowed with involuntary tears, and he reflected upon his past experience and his condition at the present time. When 'Ajib heard the address of his father, his heart was in like manner drawn towards him by sympathy, and he looked towards the eunuch, and said to him, Verily my heart is moved with sympathy for this cook : he seemeth to have parted with a son : come in with us, therefore, that we may refresh his heart and eat his offering of hospitality : perhaps God, through our so doing, may accomplish our union with our father. But the eunuch replied, By Allah, O my master, it is not proper. How should we, who are of the family of the Wezir, eat in the shop of a cook ? I will, however, drive away the people from thee, lest they see thee : otherwise it will be impossible for thee to enter the shop.—On hearing the reply of the eunuch, Bedr-ed-Din was surprised, and, looking towards him, while his tears flowed down his cheeks, said to him, Verily my heart loveth him.—Let us hear no more of these words, said the eunuch :—and he desired the youth not to enter : but the father of 'Ajib cast his eyes upon the eunuch, and said, Great sir, wherefore wilt thou not refresh my heart and come in to me ? O thou who resemblest black dust, but whose heart is white ! O thou who hast been described in such and such terms of praise !—so that the eunuch laughed, and said, What wouldest thou say ? Speak, and be brief.—And Bedr-ed-Din recited this couplet :—

Were it not for his accomplishments and admirable faithfulness, he had not been invested with authority in the abode of Kings.
What an excellent guardian for the harim is he ! On account of his beauty the angels of heaven wait upon him !

This address pleased the eunuch so much that he took the hand of 'Ajib, and entered the cook's shop ; and Bedr-ed-Din ladled out a saucerful of conserve of pomegranate-grains prepared with almonds and sugar, and the slave and the

youth ate together ; Bedr-ed-Din saying to them, Ye have delighted me by your company : eat, and may it benefit you ! 'Ajib then said to his father, Sit down and eat with us ; and perhaps God will unite us to him whom we desire. And Bedr-ed-Din said, O my son, hast thou been afflicted in thy tender years by the separation of those whom thou lovest ?—Yes, O uncle, answered 'Ajib : my heart is inflamed by the absence of one of those who are dear to me : the friend who hath withdrawn himself from me is my father, and I and my grandfather have come abroad to search for him through the world ; and how do I sigh for my union with him !—And he wept bitterly ; and his father, moved by his tears, wept with him, reflecting upon his own desolate state, separated from those he loved, deprived of his father, and far removed from his mother ; and the eunuch was moved with compassion for him.

They all ate together until they were satisfied ; after which, the youth and the slave arose, and quitted the shop of Bedr-ed-Din, who felt as if his soul had departed from his body and gone with them. He could not endure their absence for the twinkling of an eye ; so he shut up his shop and followed them, though ignorant that the youth was his son, and walked quickly until he came up to them before they had gone out from the great gate ; whereupon the eunuch, looking back at him, said, What dost thou want, O cook ? Bedr-ed-Din answered, When ye departed from me, I felt as if my soul had quitted my body, and, having some business in the suburb, I was desirous of accompanying you to transact my business, and, after that, to return. But the eunuch was angry, and said to 'Ajib, Verily this repast was unlucky : respectful treatment hath become incumbent on us ; and see, he is following us from place to place. 'Ajib therefore looked round, and, seeing the cook, was enraged, and his face became red ; but he said to the eunuch, Suffer him to walk in the public road of the Muslims ; but when we shall have turned from it to our tents, if he do the same, and we know that he is following us, we will drive him back. And he hung down his head and went on, with the eunuch behind him. Bedr-ed-Din, however, followed them to the Meydan el-Hasba, and when

they had drawn near to the tents they looked back and saw him behind them; and 'Ajib was angry, fearing that the eunuch might inform his grandfather, and lest it should be said that he had entered the cook's shop, and that the cook had followed him. He looked at him till his eyes met the eye of his father, who had become as a body without a soul; and he fancied that his eye bore an expression of deceit, and that he was perhaps a knave: so his anger increased, and he took up a stone, and threw it at his father, and the stone struck him on the forehead, and wounded him, and he fell down in a swoon, the blood flowing over his face. 'Ajib went on with the eunuch to the tents; and Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, when he recovered his senses, wiped off the blood, and, having cut off a piece of linen from his turban, bound up his head with it, blaming himself, and saying, I wronged the youth when I shut up my shop and followed him, so he thought I was a deceiver. He then returned to his shop, and occupied himself with the sale of his meats; and he yearned with desire for his mother, who was at El-Basrah.

The Wezir, his uncle, remained at Damascus three days, and then departed to Hims, and, having entered this town, proceeded thence, inquiring at every place where he halted in his journey until he had arrived at Maridin and El-Mosil and Diyar Bekr. He continued his journey until he arrived at the city of El-Basrah, and when he had entered it and taken up his quarters, he went and presented himself before the Sultan, who received him with respect and honour, and inquired the reason of his coming: so he acquainted him with his story, and informed him that the Wezir 'Ali Nur-ed-Din was his brother. The Sultan ejaculated, God have mercy upon him!—and said, O Sahib, he was my Wezir, and I loved him much: he died twelve years⁴⁰ ago, and left a son; but we have lost him, and have heard no tidings of him: his mother, however, is with us, for she is the daughter of my old Wezir. On hearing from the King that the mother of his nephew was alive, the Wezir Shems-ed-Din rejoiced, and said, I am desirous of having an interview with her. And the King gave him immediate permission to visit her at his brother's house: so he went thither, and

kissed the threshold, and, entering an open court, found a door over-arched with hard stone inlaid with various kinds of marble of every colour ; and he walked along by the walls of the house, and as he cast his eyes around upon them he observed the name of his brother Nur-ed-Din inscribed on them in characters of gold ; and he went to the name, and kissed it, and wept. He then advanced to the saloon of his brother's wife, the mother of Hasan Bedr-ed-Din of El-Basrah. During the absence of her son she had given herself up to weeping and wailing night and day ; and after she had long suffered from his separation she made for her son a tomb of marble in the midst of the saloon, where she wept for him night and day, sleeping nowhere but by this tomb. And when Shems-ed-Din arrived at her apartment he heard her voice apostrophizing the tomb ; and while she was thus occupied he entered and saluted her, and informed her that he was her husband's brother, acquainting her with what had passed, and revealing to her the particulars of the story. He told her that her son Hasan Bedr-ed-Din had passed a whole night with his daughter, and disappeared in the morning, and that his daughter had borne him a son, whom he had brought with him : and when she heard this news of her son, and that he was perhaps still living, and beheld her husband's brother, she fell at his feet and kissed them, addressing him with this couplet :—

Divinely is he inspired who acquainteth me with their approach ;
for he hath brought information most delightful to be heard.
If he would be satisfied with that which is cast off, I would give
him a heart rent in pieces at the hour of valediction.

The Wezir then sent to bring 'Ajib ; and when he came, his grandmother rose to him, and embraced him, and wept ; but Shems-ed-Din said to her, This is not a time for weeping, but rather a time for preparing thyself to accompany us on our return to the land of Egypt : and perhaps God may unite us with thy son, my nephew. She replied, I hear and obey :—and, arising immediately, collected all her property and treasures, and her female slaves, and forthwith prepared herself : after which the Wezir, Shems-ed-Din, went up again to the Sultan of El-Basrah, and took leave

of him ; and the King sent with him presents and rarities for the Sultan of Egypt.

The Wezir departed without delay, accompanied by his brother's wife, and continued his journey until he arrived at the city of Damascus, where he alighted again, and encamped, and said to his attendants, We will remain at Damascus a week, to buy, for the Sultan, presents and rarities. 'Ajib then said to the eunuch, Boy, I long for a little diversion : arise, therefore, and let us go to the market of Damascus, and see what is going on there, and what hath happened to that cook whose confection we ate and whose head we broke, notwithstanding he had treated us with kindness : we acted ill towards him. The eunuch replied, I hear and obey :—and 'Ajib went forth with him from the tents, the tie of blood inciting him to visit his father, and they entered the city, and proceeded to the shop of the cook, whom they found standing there. It was then near the time of afternoon-prayers ; and it happened that he had again just prepared a confection of pomegranate-grains ; and when they drew near to him, the heart of 'Ajib yearned towards him when he saw him, and he perceived the scar occasioned by the stone that he had thrown. He said to him, Peace be on thee ! Know that my heart is with thee.—And when Bedr-ed-Din beheld him, his affections were engrossed by him, and his heart throbbed with emotion towards him, and he hung down his head, desiring to adapt his tongue to speech, and unable to do so : but presently he raised his head, and, looking towards the youth in an humble and abject manner, recited these verses :—

I wished for my beloved ; but when I beheld him I was confounded, and possessed neither tongue nor eye.

I hung down my head in honour and reverence, and would have hidden what I felt ; but it would not be concealed.

I had prepared a volume of expostulation ; but when we met I remembered not a word.

He then said to them, Refresh ye my heart, and eat of my food ; for, by Allah, as soon as I beheld thee, my heart yearned towards thee, and I had not followed thee unless I had been deprived of my reason.—By Allah, replied 'Ajib, thou dost indeed love us, and we ate a morsel with

thee ; but after it thou keptest close behind us and wouldst have disgraced us : we will not eat again with thee, therefore, but on the condition of thy swearing that thou wilt not follow us ; and otherwise we will not come to thee again henceforth ; for we are staying at this city a week, in order that my grandfather may procure presents for the King.—I bind myself, said Bedr-ed-Din, to do as ye desire. So 'Ajib entered the shop with the eunuch, and Bedr-ed-Din placed before them a saucer filled with the confection of pomegranate-grains ; upon which 'Ajib said to him, Eat with us ; and may God dispel our affliction :—and Bedr-ed-Din was delighted, and he ate with them ; but he turned not his eyes from the youth ; for his heart and all his faculties were captivated by him. 'Ajib, observing this, said to him, Knowest thou not that I told thee thou wast a rude doter ? Enough of this : continue not to gaze at my face.—Bedr-ed-Din, therefore, apologized to him, and began to put morsels into the mouth of 'Ajib, and then did the same to the eunuch. Afterwards he poured the water upon their hands, and when they had washed he loosed a napkin of silk from his waist and wiped them with it. He next sprinkled rose-water upon them from a bottle that was in his shop, and went out, and returned with two cups of sherbet prepared with rose-water infused with musk, and, placing these before them, he said, Complete your kindness. So 'Ajib took a cup and drank ; and Bedr-ed-Din handed the other to the eunuch ; and both drank until their stomachs were full, and gratified their appetites to a degree beyond their usual habit.

They then departed, and hastened back to the tents, and 'Ajib went in to his grandmother, the mother of his father Hasan Bedr-ed-Din ; and she kissed him, and said, Where hast thou been ? He answered, In the city. And she arose, and brought him a saucer of confection of pomegranate-grains, which happened to be somewhat deficient in sweetness ; and she said to the eunuch, Sit down with thy master. The eunuch said within himself, By Allah, we have no appetite. He, however, seated himself, and 'Ajib did the same, though satiated with what he had eaten and drunk, and dipped a morsel of bread in the

confection, and ate it; but it seemed to him insipid, on account of his being thus cloyed, and he loathed it, and said, What is this nasty dish?—O my child, said his grandmother, dost thou find fault with my cookery? It was I who prepared it; and, except thy father, Hasan Bedr-ed-Din, there is none who can cook it as well as myself.—By Allah, O my mistress, replied 'Ajib, This thy dish is not well prepared: we have just now seen in the city a cook who had prepared a confection of pomegranate-grains, but its odour was such as to dilate the heart, and the confection itself, such as to excite appetite in one already satiated: as to thine, in comparison with his, it is good for nothing.

His grandmother, on hearing this, fell into a violent rage, and, turning towards the eunuch, said to him, Wo to thee! Hast thou corrupted my child? Thou hast taken him into the shops of the cooks!—The eunuch feared, and denied, saying, We did not enter the shop, but only passed by it:—but 'Ajib said, By Allah, we entered and ate, and what we ate was better than this mess of thine. And upon this his grandmother arose, and informed her husband's brother, and incensed him against the eunuch. The slave was therefore brought before the Wezir, and he said to him, Wherefore didst thou take my child into the cook's shop? The eunuch, fearing, said again, We did not enter.—Nay, said 'Ajib, we did enter, and ate of a confection of pomegranate-grains until we were satiated, and the cook gave us to drink sherbet with ice and sugar. The Wezir's anger with the eunuch now increased, and he asked him again; but still he denied. Then said the Wezir, If thine assertion be true, sit down and eat before us. The eunuch therefore advanced, and would have eaten; but he could not; and he threw down the morsel that was in his hand, and said, O my master, I am satiated since yesterday. And by this the Wezir knew that he had eaten in the shop of the cook: so he ordered the female slaves to throw him down upon the ground, and they did so, and he gave him a severe beating, while the slave cried for mercy, but still saying, I am satiated since yesterday! The Wezir then interrupted the beating, and said to him, Declare the truth. And at length the eunuch said, Know that we did enter the shop of the cook while he was cooking

pomegranate-grains, and he ladled out for us some of the confection, and, by Allah, I never in my life ate any like it, or any more detestable than this which is before us.

The mother of Bedr-ed-Din, enraged at this, said, Thou shalt go to this cook and bring us a saucerful of his confection and shew it to thy master, that he may say which of the two is the better and the more delicious.—Well, replied the eunuch: and immediately she gave him a saucer, and half a piece of gold; and he went to the shop, and said to the cook, We have laid a wager respecting thy confection at the tent of our master; for there is a mess of pomegranate-grains cooked by the family: give us, therefore, for this half-piece of gold, and apply thyself to prepare it perfectly; for we have received an excruciating beating on account of thy cookery. Laughing at these words, Bedr-ed-Din replied, By Allah, none excelleth in the preparation of this confection except myself and my mother, and she is now in a distant country. And he ladled out as much as filled the saucer, and perfected it by the addition of some musk and rose-water. The eunuch then hastened back with it to the family; and the mother of Hasan took it, and, tasting its delicious flavour, immediately knew who had prepared it, and shrieked, and fell down in a swoon. The Wezir was amazed at the event; and they sprinkled some rose-water upon her, and when she recovered she said, If my son be yet in the world, no one but he cooked this confection: he is my son Hasan Bedr-ed-Din without doubt: for none but he can prepare this, except myself, and it was I who taught him to do it.

When the Wezir heard these words, he rejoiced exceedingly, and exclaimed, Oh, how I long to behold my brother's son! Will fortune, indeed, unite us with him? But I look not for our union from any but God, whose name be exalted! —And he instantly arose, and called out to his male attendants, saying, Let twenty men of you go to the shop of the cook, and demolish it, and bind his hands behind him with his turban, and drag him hither by force, but without any injury to his person. They replied, Well. The Wezir then rode immediately to the palace, and, presenting himself before the Viceroy of Damascus, shewed

him the contents of the letters which he had brought from the Sultan ; and the Viceroy, after kissing them, put them to his head, and said, Who is thine offender ? He answered, A man who is by trade a cook. And instantly the Viceroy ordered his Chamberlains to repair to his shop ; and they went thither ; but found it demolished, and everything that had been in it broken ; for when the Wezir went to the palace, his servants did as he had commanded them. They were then waiting his return from the palace ; and Bedr-ed-Din was saying within himself, What can they have discovered in the confection, that such an event as this should have befallen me ? And when the Wezir returned from the Viceroy, and had received his permission to take his offender and to depart with him, he entered the encampment, and called for the cook. They brought him, therefore, with his hands bound behind him with his turban ; and when he saw his uncle he wept bitterly, and said, O my master, what crime have ye found in me ? The Wezir said to him, Art thou he who cooked the confection of pomegranate-grains ? He answered, Yes : and have ye found in it anything that requires one's head to be struck off ? This, replied the Wezir, is the smallest part of thy recompense.—Wilt thou not, said Bedr-ed-Din, acquaint me with my crime ? The Wezir answered, Yea, immediately. And forthwith he called out to the young men, saying, Bring the camels !

They then took Bedr-ed-Din, and put him in a chest, and, having locked him up in it, commenced their journey, and continued on their way till the approach of night, when they halted and ate, and, taking out Bedr-ed-Din, fed him ; after which they put him again into the chest, and in like manner proceeded to another station. Here also they took him out ; and the Wezir said to him, Art thou he who cooked the confection of pomegranate-grains ? He answered, Yes, O my master. And the Wezir said, Shackle his feet. And they did so, and restored him to the chest. They then continued their journey to Cairo ; and when they arrived at the quarter called Er-Reydaniyeh,⁵⁰ the Wezir commanded to take out Bedr-ed-Din again from the chest, and to bring a carpenter, to whom he said, Make, for this man, a cross.

—What, said Bedr-ed-Din, dost thou mean to do with it? The Wezir answered, I will crucify thee upon it, and nail thee to it, and then parade thee about the city.—Wherefore, demanded Bedr-ed-Din, wilt thou treat me thus? The Wezir replied, For thy faulty preparation of the confection of pomegranate-grains, because thou madest it deficient in pepper.—Because of its deficiency in pepper, exclaimed Bedr-ed-Din, wilt thou do all this to me? Art thou not satisfied with having thus imprisoned me, and fed me every day with only one meal?—The Wezir answered, For its deficiency in pepper, thy recompense shall be nothing less than death. And Bedr-ed-Din was amazed, and bewailed his lot, and remained a while absorbed in reflection. The Wezir, therefore, said to him, Of what art thou thinking? He answered, Of imbecile minds, such as thine; for if thou wert a man of sense thou wouldest not have treated me in this manner on account of the deficiency of pepper.—It is incumbent on us, replied the Wezir, to punish thee, that thou mayest not do the like again:—to which Bedr-ed-Din rejoined, The least of the things thou hast done to me were a sufficient punishment. The Wezir, however, said, Thy death is unavoidable.—All this conversation took place while the carpenter was preparing the cross; and Bedr-ed-Din was looking on.

Thus they both continued until the approach of night, when Bedr-ed-Din's uncle took him and put him again into the chest, saying, To-morrow shall be thy crucifixion. He then waited until he perceived that he was asleep; upon which he remounted, and, with the chest borne before him, entered the city, and repaired to his house: and when he had arrived there he said to his daughter Sitt-el-Hosn, Praise be to God who hath restored to thee the son of thine uncle! Arise, and furnish the house as it was on the night of the bridal display.—She therefore ordered her female slaves to do so; and they arose, and lighted the candles; and the Wezir brought out the paper upon which he had written his inventory of the furniture of the house, and read it, and ordered them to put every thing in its place, so that the beholder would not doubt that this was the very night of the bridal display. He directed them to put Bedr-ed-Din's

turban in the place where its owner had deposited it, and in like manner the trousers, and the purse which was beneath the mattress, and ordered his daughter to adorn herself as she was on the bridal night, and to enter the bride-chamber ; saying to her, When the son of thine uncle comes into thy chamber, say to him, Thou hast loitered since thou withdrewst from me this night :—and request him to return and converse with thee till day.—Having thus arranged everything, the Wezir took out Bedr-ed-Din from the chest, removed the shackles from his feet, and stripped him of his outer clothes, leaving him in his shirt.

All this was done while he was asleep, unconscious of what was passing ; and when he awoke, and found himself in an illuminated vestibule, he said within himself, Am I bewildered by dreams, or am I awake ? Then rising, he advanced a little way to an inner door, and looked, and lo, he was in the house in which the bride had been displayed, and he beheld the bride-chamber and the couch and his turban and clothes. Confounded at the sight of these things, he took one step forwards and another backwards, thinking, Am I asleep or awake ? And he began to wipe his forehead, and exclaimed in his astonishment, By Allah, this is the dwelling of the bride who was here displayed before me : and yet I was just now in a chest. And while he was addressing himself, behold Sitt-el-Hosn lifted up the corner of the mosquito-curtain, and said, O my master, wilt thou not come in ? for thou hast loitered since thou withdrewst from me this night. When he heard these words he looked at her face, and laughed, and said, Verily, these appearances are bewildering illusions of a dream ! Then entering, he sighed ; and as he reflected upon what had happened to him, he was perplexed at his situation, and his case seemed involved in obscurity. Looking at his turban and trousers, and the purse containing the thousand pieces of gold, he exclaimed, Allah is all-knowing !—but it seemeth to me that I am bewildered by dreams !—And he was confounded in the excess of his astonishment. Upon this, therefore, Sitt-el-Hosn said to him, Wherefore do I behold thee thus astonished and perplexed ? Thou wast not so in the commencement of the night.—And he laughed, and

asked her, How many years have I been absent from thee? —Allah preserve thee! she exclaimed. The name of Allah encompass thee! Thou hast only withdrawn to yonder apartment. What hath passed in thy mind? —On hearing this he smiled, and replied, Thou hast spoken truth; but when I withdrew from thee, sleep overcame me, and I dreamt that I was a cook in Damascus, and that I lived there twelvest years; and I thought that a youth of the sons of the great came to me, accompanied by a eunuch,—and he proceeded to relate what had happened to him in consequence of this youth's visit: then drawing his hand over his forehead, he felt the scar occasioned by the blow, and exclaimed, By Allah, O my mistress, it seemeth as though it were true; for he struck me with a stone upon my forehead, and cut it open: it seemeth, therefore, as though this had really happened when I was awake: but probably this dream occurred when we were both asleep. I imagined in my dream that I was transported to Damascus, without tarbush or turban or trousers, and that I followed the occupation of a cook.—And again, for a while, he remained utterly confounded. He then said, By Allah, I imagined that I made a confection of pomegranate-grains containing but little pepper. Verily I must have been asleep, and in my sleep have seen all this.—I conjure thee by Allah, said Sitt-el-Hosn, tell me what more thou sawest? And he related to her the whole; and added, If I had not awaked, they would have crucified me upon a wooden cross.—On account of what? said she. He answered, On account of the deficiency of pepper in the confection of pomegranate-grains; and I imagined that they demolished my shop, and broke all my vessels, and put me in a chest, and brought the carpenter to make a cross of wood; for they intended to crucify me upon it. Praise be to God, therefore, who caused all this to occur to me in sleep, and caused it not to happen to me when I was awake! —Sitt-el-Hosn, laughing at his words, pressed him to her bosom, and he in like manner embraced her. Then reflecting again, he said, By Allah, it seems as if it had happened when I was awake; and I knew not the reason, nor the truth of the case.—And he composed himself to sleep, perplexed with his case, and sometimes saying,

I saw it in my sleep,—and at other times, I experienced it awake.

Thus he continued until the morning, when his uncle, the Wezir Shems-ed-Din, came in to him, and saluted him; and Bedr-ed-Din, as soon as he beheld him, exclaimed, I conjure thee by Allah, tell me art not thou he who gave orders to bind my hands behind me, and to nail up my shop, on account of the confection of pomegranate-grains, because it was deficient in pepper? The Wezir answered, Know, O my son, that the truth hath appeared, and what was hidden hath been manifested. Thou art the son of my brother; and I did not this but to know if thou wert he who visited my daughter on that night. I was not convinced of this until I saw that thou knewest the house, and thy turban and trousers and gold, and the two papers; namely, the one which thou wrotest, and that which thy father, my brother, wrote: for I had never seen thee before, and therefore knew thee not; and as to thy mother, I have brought her with me from El-Basrah.—Having thus said, he threw himself upon him, and wept; and Bedr-ed-Din, full of astonishment at his uncle's words, embraced him, and in like manner wept from excess of joy. The Wezir then said to him, O my son, the cause of all this was what passed between me and thy father. And he related to him the circumstances of their case, and the cause of his father's departure to El-Basrah; after which he sent for 'Ajib; and when the father of the youth saw him, he exclaimed, This is he who threw the stone at me.—This, said the Wezir, is thy son. And Bedr-ed-Din cast himself upon him, and recited the following verses:—

Long have I wept on account of our disunion; the tears overflowing from my eyelids;

And I vowed that if Providence should bring us together, I would never again mention our separation.

Joy hath overcome me to such a degree that by its excess it hath made me weep.

O eye, thou hast become so accustomed to tears that thou weepest from happiness as from grief.⁵²

And when he had uttered these words, his mother, beholding him, threw herself upon him, and repeated this couplet:—

Fortune made a vow to torment me incessantly ; but thine oath hath proved false, O Fortune ; therefore expiate it.

Happiness hath arrived, and the beloved is come to my relief : repair then to the messenger of festivity, and hasten.

She afterwards related to him everything that had happened to her ; and he also acquainted her with all that he had suffered ; and they offered up thanks to God for their union. The Wezir then went up to the Sultan, and informed him of these occurrences ; and the King was astonished, and ordered that a statement of them should be inserted in the records, to be preserved to future ages. And the Wezir resided with his brother's son, and his own daughter and her son, and with the wife of his brother ; and all of them passed their lives in the enjoyment of the utmost happiness until they were visited by the terminator of delights, and the separator of companions.

Such, O Prince of the Faithful, said Ja'far, were the events that happened to the Wezir Shems-ed-Din and his brother Nur-ed-Din.—By Allah, exclaimed the Khalifeh Harun Er-Rashid, this story is wonderful ! And he gave one of his own concubines to the young man who had killed his wife, and appointed him a regular maintenance ; and the young man became one of his companions at the table.

CHAPTER V

[NIGHTS 24—32]

THE STORY OF THE HUMPBACK

THERE was, in ancient times, in the city of El-Basrah,⁵³ a tailor who enjoyed an ample income, and was fond of sport and merriment. He was in the habit of going out occasionally with his wife, that they might amuse themselves with strange and diverting scenes ; and one day they went forth in the afternoon,⁵⁴ and, returning home in the evening, met a humpbacked man, whose aspect was such as to excite laughter in the angry, and to dispel anxiety and grief : so they approached him to enjoy the pleasure of gazing at him, and invited him to return with them to their house, and to join with them in a carousal that night.

He assented to their proposal ; and after he had gone with them to the house, the tailor went out to the market ; night having then approached. He bought some fried fish, and bread and limes and sweetmeat, and, returning with them, placed the fish before the humpback ; and they sat down to eat ; and the tailor's wife took a large piece of fish, and crammed the humpback with it, and, closing his mouth with her hand, said, By Allah, thou shalt not swallow it but by gulping it at once, and I will not give thee time to chew it. He therefore swallowed it ; but it contained a large and sharp bone, which stuck across in his throat, his destiny having so determined, and he expired. The tailor exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great ! Alas, that this poor creature should not have died but in this manner by our hands !—Wherefore this idling ? exclaimed the woman.—And what can I do ? asked her husband.—Arise, she answered, and take him in thy bosom, and cover him with a silk napkin : I will go out

first, and do thou follow me, this very night, and say, This is my son, and this is his mother ; and we are going to convey him to the physician, that he may give him some medicine.

No sooner had the tailor heard these words than he arose, and took the humpback in his bosom. His wife, accompanying him, exclaimed, O my child ! may Allah preserve thee ! Where is the part in which thou feelest pain ; and where hath this small-pox attacked thee ?—So every one who saw them said, They are conveying a child smitten with the small-pox. Thus they proceeded, inquiring, as they went, for the abode of the physician ; and the people directed them to the house of a physician who was a Jew ; and they knocked at the door, and there came down to them a black slave-girl, who opened the door, and beheld a man carrying (as she imagined) a child, and attended by its mother ; and she said, What is your business ?—We have a child here, answered the tailor's wife, and we want the physician to see him : take, then, this quarter of a piece of gold, and give it to thy master, and let him come down and see my son ; for he is ill. The girl, therefore, went up, and the tailor's wife, entering the vestibule, said to her husband, Leave the humpback here, and let us take ourselves away. And the tailor, accordingly, set him up against the wall, and went out with his wife.

The slave-girl, meanwhile, went in to the Jew, and said to him, Below, in the house, is a sick person, with a woman and a man : and they have given me a quarter of a piece of gold for thee, that thou mayest prescribe for them what may suit his case. And when the Jew saw the quarter of a piece of gold, he rejoiced, and, rising in haste, went down in the dark ; and in doing so, his foot struck against the lifeless humpback. O Ezra ! he exclaimed—O Heavens and the Ten Commandments ! O Aaron, and Joshua son of Nun ! It seemeth that I have stumbled against this sick person, and he hath fallen down the stairs and died ! And how shall I go forth with one killed from my house ? O Ezra's ass !*—He then raised him, and took him up from the

* 'Ozeyr, or Ezra, "riding on an ass by the ruins of Jerusalem, after it had been destroyed by the Chaldeans, doubted in his mind by

court of the house to his wife, and acquainted her with the accident.—And why sittest thou here idle? said she; for if thou remain thus until daybreak our lives will be lost: let me and thee, then, take him up to the terrace, and throw him into the house of our neighbour the Muslim; for he is the steward of the Sultan's kitchen, and often do the cats come to his house, and eat of the food which they find there; as do the mice too: and if he remain there for a night, the dogs will come down to him from the terraces and eat him up entirely. So the Jew and his wife went up, carrying the humpback, and let him down by his hands and feet to the pavement; placing him against the wall; which having done, they descended.

Not long had the humpback been thus deposited when the steward returned to his house, and opened the door, and, going up with a lighted candle in his hand, found a son of Adam standing in the corner next the kitchen; upon which he exclaimed, What is this? By Allah, the thief that hath stolen our goods is none other than a son of Adam, who taketh what he findeth of flesh or grease, even though I keep it concealed from the cats and the dogs; and if I killed all the cats and dogs of the quarter it would be of no use; for he cometh down from the terraces!—And so saying, he took up a great mallet, and struck him with it, and then, drawing close to him, gave him a second blow with it upon the chest, when the humpback fell down, and he found that he was dead; whereupon he grieved, and said, There is no strength nor power but in God! And he feared for himself, and exclaimed, Curse upon the grease and the flesh, and upon this night, in which the destiny of this man hath been accomplished by my hand! Then, looking upon him, and perceiving that he was a humpback, he said, Is it not enough that thou art humpbacked, but must thou also be a robber,

what means God could raise the city and its inhabitants again; whereupon God caused him to die, and he remained in that condition a hundred years; at the end of which God restored him to life, and he found a basket of figs and a cruse of wine he had with him, not in the least spoiled or corrupted, but his ass was dead, the bones only remaining; and these, while the Prophet looked on, were raised and cloathed with flesh, becoming an ass again, which, being inspired with life, began immediately to bray.”—Sale's Koran, ch. ii., note [p. 31, ed. 1734].

and steal the flesh and the grease? O Protector, cover me with thy gracious shelter!—And he lifted him upon his shoulders, and descended, and went forth from his house, towards the close of the night, and stopped not until he had conveyed him to the commencement of the market-street, where he placed him upon his feet by the side of a shop at the entrance of a lane, and there left him and retired.

Soon after, there came a Christian, the Sultan's broker, who, in a state of intoxication, had come forth to visit the bath; and he advanced, staggering, until he drew near to the humpback, when he turned his eyes, and beheld one standing by him. Now some persons had snatched off his turban early in the night, and when he saw the humpback standing there, he concluded that he intended to do the same; so he clenched his fist, and struck him on the neck. Down fell the humpback upon the ground, and the Christian called out to the watchman of the market, while, still in the excess of his intoxication, he continued beating the humpback, and attempting to throttle him. As he was thus employed, the watchman came, and, finding the Christian kneeling upon the Muslim and beating him, said, Arise, and quit him! He arose, therefore, and the watchman, approaching the humpback, saw that he was dead, and exclaimed, How is it that the Christian dareth to kill the Muslim? Then seizing the Christian, he bound his hands behind him, and took him to the house of the Wali; * the Christian saying within himself, O Heavens! O Virgin! how have I killed this man? and how quickly did he die from a blow of the hand!—Intoxication had departed, and reflection had come.

The humpback and the Christian passed the remainder of the night in the house of the Wali, and the Wali ordered the executioner to proclaim the Christian's crime, and he set up a gallows, and stationed him beneath it. The executioner then came, and threw the rope round his neck, and was about to hang him, when the Sultan's steward pushed through the crowd, seeing the Christian standing beneath the gallows, and the people made way for him, and he said

* Chief police magistrate.

to the executioner, Do it not, for it was I who killed him.—Wherefore didst thou kill him? said the Wali. He answered, I went into my house last night, and saw that he had descended from the terrace and stolen my goods; so I struck him with a mallet upon his chest, and he died, and I carried him out, and conveyed him to the market-street, where I set him up in such a place, at the entrance of such a lane. Is it not enough for me to have killed a Muslim, that a Christian should be killed on my account? Hang, then, none but me.—The Wali, therefore, when he heard these words, liberated the Christian broker, and said to the executioner, Hang this man, on the ground of his confession. And he took off the rope from the neck of the Christian, and put it round the neck of the steward, and, having stationed him beneath the gallows, was about to hang him, when the Jewish physician pushed through the crowd, and called out to the executioner, saying to him, Do it not; for none killed him but I; and the case was this: he came to my house to be cured of a disease, and as I descended to him I struck against him with my foot, and he died: kill not the steward, therefore; but kill me. So the Wali gave orders to hang the Jewish physician; and the executioner took off the rope from the steward's neck, and put it round the neck of the Jew. But, lo, the tailor came, and, forcing his way among the people, said to the executioner, Do it not; for none killed him but I; and it happened thus: I was out amusing myself during the day, and as I was returning at the commencement of the night, I met this humpback in a state of intoxication, with a tambourine, and singing merrily; and I stopped to divert myself by looking at him, and took him to my house. I then bought some fish, and we sat down to eat, and my wife took a piece of fish and a morsel of bread, and crammed them into his mouth, and he was choked, and instantly died. Then I and my wife took him to the house of the Jew, and the girl came down and opened the door, and while she went up to her master, I set up the humpback by the stairs, and went away with my wife: so, when the Jew came down and stumbled against him, he thought that he had killed him.—And he said to the Jew, Is this true? He answered, Yes.

The tailor, then, looking towards the Wali, said to him, Liberate the Jew, and hang me. And when the Wali heard this he was astonished at the case of the humpback, and said, Verily this is an event that should be recorded in books! And he said to the executioner, Liberate the Jew, and hang the tailor on account of his own confession. So the executioner led him forward, saying, Dost thou put forward this and take back that; and shall we not hang one? And he put the rope round the neck of the tailor.

Now the humpback was the Sultan's buffoon, and the Sultan could not bear him to be out of his sight; and when the humpback had got drunk, and been absent that night and the next day until noon, the King inquired respecting him of some of his attendants, and they answered him, O our lord, the Wali hath taken him forth dead, and gave orders to hang the person who killed him, and there came a second and a third person, each saying, None killed him but I:—and describing to the Wali the cause of his killing him. When the King, therefore, heard this, he called out to the Chamberlain, and said to him, Go down to the Wali, and bring them all hither before me. So the Chamberlain went down, and found that the executioner had almost put to death the tailor, and he called out to him, saying, Do it not:—and informed the Wali that the case had been reported to the King. And he took him, and the humpback borne with him, and the tailor and the Jew and the Christian and the steward, and went up with them all to the King; and when the Wali came into the presence of the King, he kissed the ground, and related to him all that had happened. And the King was astonished, and was moved with merriment, at hearing this tale; and he commanded that it should be written in letters of gold. He then said to those who were present, Have ye ever heard anything like the story of this humpback? And upon this the Christian advanced, and said, O King of the age, if thou permit me I will relate to thee an event that hath occurred to me more wonderful and strange and exciting than the story of the humpback.—Tell us then thy story, said the King. And the Christian related as follows:—

THE STORY TOLD BY THE CHRISTIAN BROKER

Know, O King of the age, that I came to this country with merchandise, and destiny stayed me among your people. I was born in Cairo, and am one of its Copts, and there I was brought up. My father was a broker ; and when I had attained to manhood, he died, and I succeeded to his business ; and as I was sitting one day, lo, a young man of most handsome aspect, and clad in a dress of the richest description, came to me, riding upon an ass, and, when he saw me, saluted me ; whereupon I rose to him, to pay him honour, and he produced a handkerchief containing some sesame, and said, What is the value of an ardebb * of this ? I answered him, A hundred pieces of silver. And he said to me, Take the carriers and the measurers, and repair to the Khan of El-Jawali ⁵⁶ in the district of Bab en-Nasr [†] : there wilt thou find me. And he left me and went his way, after having given me the handkerchief with the sample of the sesame. So I went about to the purchasers ; and the price of each ardebb amounted to a hundred and twenty pieces of silver ; and I took with me four carriers, and went to him. I found him waiting my arrival ; and when he saw me he rose and opened a magazine, and we measured its contents, and the whole amounted to fifty ardebbs. The young man then said, Thou shalt have, for every ardebb, ten pieces of silver as brokerage ; and do thou receive the price and keep it in thy care : the whole sum will be five thousand ; and thy share of it, five hundred : so there will remain for me four thousand and five hundred ; and when I shall have finished the sale of the goods contained in my store-rooms, I will come to thee and receive it. I replied, It shall be as thou

* In Cairo, nearly five bushels.

† "Gate of Victory or of Aid :" the easternmost of the northern gates of Cairo built in 1088. The Khan referred to is mentioned by El-Makrizi as being situated at a short distance within the present gate and by the site of the older gate of the same name, and as existing in his time [1417].

desirest. And I kissed his hand, and left him. Thus there accrued to me, on that day, a thousand pieces of silver, [besides my brokerage.]

He was absent from me a month, at the expiration of which he came and said to me, Where is the money? I answered, Here it is, ready. And he said, Keep it until I come to thee to receive it. And I remained expecting him; but he was absent from me another month; after which he came again, and said, Where is the money? Whereupon I arose and saluted him, and said to him, Wilt thou eat something with us? He, however, declined, and said, Keep the money until I shall have gone and returned to receive it from thee. He then departed; and I arose, and prepared for him the money, and sat expecting him; but again he absented himself from me for a month, and then came and said, After this day I will receive it from thee. And he departed, and I made ready the money for him as before, and sat waiting his return. Again, however, he remained a month absent from me, and I said within myself, Verily this young man is endowed with consummate liberality! After the month he came, attired in rich clothing, and resembling the full moon, appearing as if he had just come out of the bath, with red cheek and fair forehead, and a mole like a globule of ambergris. When I beheld him I kissed his hand, and invoked a blessing upon him, and said to him, O my master, wilt thou not take thy money?—Have patience with me, he answered, until I shall have transacted all my affairs, after which I will receive it from thee. And so saying, he departed; and I said within myself, By Allah, when he cometh I will entertain him as a guest, on account of the profit which I have derived from his money; for great wealth hath accrued to me from it.

At the close of the year he returned, clad in a dress richer than the former; and I swore to him that he should alight to be my guest.—On the condition, he replied, that thou expend nothing of my money that is in thy possession. I said, Well:—and, having seated him, prepared what was requisite of meats and drinks and other provisions, and placed them before him, saying, In the name of Allah! And he drew near to the table, and put forth his left hand,

and thus ate with me: so I was surprised at him;* and when we had finished he washed his hand, and I gave him a napkin with which to wipe it. We then sat down to converse, and I said, O my master, dispel a trouble from my mind. Wherefore didst thou eat with thy left hand? Probably something paineth thee in thy right hand?—On hearing these words, he stretched forth his arm from his sleeve, and behold, it was maimed—an arm without a hand! And I wondered at this; but he said to me, Wonder not; nor say in thy heart that I ate with thee with my left hand from a motive of self-conceit; for rather to be wondered at is the cause of the cutting off of my right hand. And what, said I, was the cause of it? He answered thus:—

Know that I am from Baghdad: my father was one of the chief people of that city; and when I had attained the age of manhood, I heard the wanderers and travellers and merchants conversing respecting the land of Egypt, and their words remained in my heart until my father died, when I took large sums of money, and prepared merchandise consisting of the stuffs of Baghdad and of El-Mosil, and similar precious goods, and, having packed them up, journeyed from Baghdad; and God decreed me safety until I entered this your city. And so saying, he wept, and repeated these verses:—

The blear-eyed escapeth a pit into which the clear-sighted falleth;
And the ignorant, an expression by which the shrewd sage is ruined.
The believer can scarce earn his food, while the impious infidel is favoured.

What art or act can a man devise? It is what the Almighty appointeth!

I entered Cairo, continued the young man, and deposited the stuffs in the Khan of Mesrur,† and, having unbound my packages and put them in the magazines, gave to the servant some money to buy for us something to eat, after which I slept a little; and when I arose, I went to Beyn el-Kasreyn. I then returned, and passed the night; and in the morning

* The Arabs consider it indecorous to eat with the left hand.

† [In the Beyn el-Kasreyn or "Betwixt the Palaces," by the present Suk en-Nahhasin. See Lane-Poole, *Story of Cairo* (1902), pp. 266-270.]

following, I opened a bale of stuff, and said within myself, I will arise and go through some of the market-streets, and see the state of the mart. So I took some stuff, and made some of my servants carry it, and proceeded until I arrived at the Keysariyeh* of Jaharkas,⁷⁷ where the brokers came to me, having heard of my arrival, and took from me the stuff, and cried it about for sale; but the price bidden amounted not to the prime cost. And upon this the Sheykh of the brokers said to me, O my master, I know a plan by which thou mayest profit; and it is this: that thou do as other merchants, and sell thy merchandise upon credit for a certain period, employing a scrivener and a witness and a money-changer, and receive a portion of the profits every Thursday and Monday; so shalt thou make of every piece of silver two; and besides that, thou wilt be able to enjoy the amusements afforded by Egypt and its Nile.—The advice is judicious, I replied: and accordingly I took the brokers with me to the Khan, and they conveyed the stuffs to the Keysariyeh, where I sold it to the merchants, writing a bond in their names, which I committed to the money-changer, and taking from him a corresponding bond. I then returned to the Khan, and remained there some days; and every day I took for my breakfast a cup of wine, and had mutton and sweetmeats prepared for me, until the month in which I became entitled to the receipt of the profits, when I seated myself every Thursday and Monday at the shops of the merchants, and the money-changer went with the scrivener and brought me the money.

Thus did I until one day I went to the bath and returned to the Khan, and, entering my lodging, took for my breakfast a cup of wine, and then slept; and when I awoke I ate a fowl, and perfumed myself with essence, and repaired to the shop of a merchant named Bedr-ed-Din the Gardener, who, when he saw me, welcomed me, and conversed with me a while in his shop; and as we were thus engaged, lo, a female came and seated herself by my side. She wore a headkerchief inclined on one side, and the odours of sweet perfumes were diffused from her, and she captivated my reason by her beauty and loveliness as she raised her izar

* A superior kind of suk or market.

and I beheld her black eyes. She saluted Bedr-ed-Din, and he returned her salutation, and stood conversing with her ; and when I heard her speech, love for her took entire possession of my heart. She then said to Bedr-ed-Din, Hast thou a piece of stuff woven with pure gold thread ? And he produced to her a piece ; and she said, May I take it and go, and then send thee the price ? But he answered, It is impossible, O my mistress ; for this is the owner of the stuff, and I owe him a portion of the profit.—Wo to thee ! said she : it is my custom to take of thee each piece of stuff for a considerable sum of money, giving thee a gain beyond thy wish, and then to send thee the price.—Yes, he rejoined ; but I am in absolute want of the price this day. And upon this she took the piece and threw it back to him upon his breast, saying, Verily your class knows not how to respect any person's rank ! And she arose, and turned away. I felt then as if my soul went with her, and, rising upon my feet, I said to her, O my mistress, kindly bestow a look upon me, and retrace thine honoured steps. And she returned, and smiled and said, For thy sake I return. And she sat opposite me upon the seat of the shop ; and I said to Bedr-ed-Din, What is the price that thou hast agreed to give for this piece. He answered, Eleven hundred pieces of silver. And I said to him, Thy profit shall be a hundred pieces of silver : give me then a paper, and I will write for thee the price upon it. I then took the piece of stuff from him, and wrote him the paper with my own hand, and gave the piece of stuff to the lady, saying to her, Take it and go ; and if thou wilt, bring the price to me in the market ; or, if thou wilt, it shall be my present to thee. She replied, God recompense thee, and bless thee with my property, and make thee my husband ; and may God accept this prayer ! —O my mistress, said I, let this piece of stuff be thine, and another like it, and permit me to see thy face. And upon this she raised her veil ; and when I beheld her face, the sight drew from me a thousand sighs, and my heart was entangled by her love, so that I no longer remained master of my reason. She then lowered the veil again, and took the piece of stuff, saying, O my master, leave me not desolate. So she departed, while I continued sitting in the

market-street until past the hour of afternoon-prayer, with wandering mind, overpowered by love. In the excess of my passion, before I rose I asked the merchant respecting her ; and he answered me, She is a rich lady, the daughter of a deceased Emir, who left her great property.

I then took leave of him, and returned to the Khan, and the supper was placed before me ; but, reflecting upon her, I could eat nothing. I laid myself down to rest ; but sleep came not to me, and I remained awake until the morning, when I arose and put on a suit of clothing different from that which I had worn the day before ; and, having drunk a cup of wine, and eaten a few morsels as my breakfast, repaired again to the shop of the merchant, and saluted him, and sat down with him. The lady soon came, wearing a dress more rich than the former, and attended by a slave-girl ; and she seated herself, and saluted me instead of Bedr-ed-Din, and said, with an eloquent tongue which I had never heard surpassed in softness or sweetness, Send with me some one to receive the twelve hundred pieces of silver, the price of the piece of stuff.—Wherefore, said I, this haste ? She replied, May we never lose thee ! And she handed to me the price ; and I sat conversing with her, and made a sign to her, which she understood, intimating my wish to visit her : whereupon she rose in haste, expressing displeasure at my hint. My heart clung to her, and I followed in the direction of her steps through the market-street ; and lo, a slave-girl came to me, and said, O my master, answer the summons of my mistress. Wondering at this, I said, No one here knoweth me.—How soon, she rejoined, hast thou forgotten her ! My mistress is she who was to-day at the shop of the merchant Bedr-ed-Din.—So I went with her until we arrived at the money-changer's ;⁵⁸ and when her mistress, who was there, beheld me, she drew me to her side, and said, O my beloved, thou hast wounded my heart, and love of thee hath taken possession of it ; and from the time that I first saw thee, neither sleep nor food nor drink hath been pleasant to me. I replied, And more than that do I feel ; and the state in which I am needs no complaint to testify it.—Then shall I visit thee, O my beloved, she asked, or wilt thou come to me ? [For our marriage must

be a secret.⁵⁰]—I am a stranger, I answered, and have no place of reception but the Khan; therefore, if thou wilt kindly permit me to go to thine abode, the pleasure will be perfect.—Well, she replied; but to-night is the eve of Friday, and let nothing be done till to-morrow, when, after thou hast joined in the prayers, do thou mount thine ass, and inquire for the Habbaniyeh; and when thou hast arrived there, ask for the house called the Ka'ah of Barakat the Nakib,* known by the surname of Abu-Shameh; for there do I reside; and delay not; for I shall be anxiously expecting thee.

On hearing this I rejoiced exceedingly, and we parted; and I returned to the Khan in which I lodged. I passed the whole night sleepless, and was scarcely sure that the daybreak had appeared when I rose and changed my clothes, and, having perfumed myself with essences and sweet scents, took with me fifty pieces of gold in a hand-kerchief, and walked from the Khan of Mesrur to Bab Zuweyleh,† where I mounted an ass, and said to its owner, Go with me to the Habbaniyeh. And in less than the twinkling of an eye he set off, and soon he stopped at a by-street called Darb El-Munakkiri,⁵⁰ when I said to him, Enter the street, and inquire for the Ka'ah of the Nakib. He was absent but a little while, and, returning, said, Alight.—Walk on before me, said I, to the Ka'ah. And he went on until he had led me to the house; whereupon I said to him, To-morrow come to me hither to convey me back.—In the name of Allah, he replied: and I handed to him a quarter of a piece of gold, and he took it and departed. I then knocked at the door, and there came forth to me two young virgins in whom the forms of womanhood had just developed themselves, resembling two moons, and they said, Enter; for our mistress is expecting thee, and she hath not slept last night from her excessive love for thee. I entered an upper saloon with seven doors: around it were latticed windows looking upon a garden in which were fruits of every kind, and running streams and singing birds: it was plastered with imperial gypsum, in which a man might see his face

* Chief.

† Or Zawileh, the southern gate of (the original) Cairo.

reflected: its roof was ornamented with gilding, and surrounded by inscriptions in letters of gold upon a ground of ultramarine: it comprised a variety of beauties, and shone in the eyes of beholders: the pavement was of coloured marbles, having in the midst of it a fountain, with four snakes of red gold casting forth water from their mouths like pearls and jewels at the corners of the pool; and it was furnished with carpets of coloured silk, and mattresses.

Having entered, I seated myself; and scarcely had I done so when the lady approached me. She wore a crown set with pearls and jewels; her hands and feet were stained with henna; and her bosom was ornamented with gold. As soon as she beheld me she smiled in my face, and embraced me, saying, Is it true that thou hast come to me, or is this a dream?—I am thy slave, I answered; and she said, Thou art welcome. Verily, from the time when I first saw thee, neither sleep hath been sweet to me nor hath food been pleasant!—In such case have *I* been, I replied;—and we sat down to converse; but I hung down my head towards the ground, in bashfulness; and not long had I thus remained when a repast was placed before me, consisting of the most exquisite dishes, as fricandoes and hashes and stuffed fowls. I ate with her until we were satisfied; when they brought the basin and ewer, and I washed my hands; after which we perfumed ourselves with rose-water infused with musk, and sat down again to converse; expressing to each other our mutual passion; and her love took such possession of me that all the wealth I possessed seemed worthless in comparison. In this manner we continued to enjoy ourselves until, night approaching, the female slaves brought supper and wine, a complete service; and we drank until midnight. Never in my life had I passed such a night. And when morning came, I arose, and, having thrown to her the handkerchief containing the pieces of gold, I took leave of her and went out; but as I did so she wept, and said, O my master, when shall I see again this lovely face? I answered her, I will be with thee at the commencement of the night. And when I went forth, I found the owner of the ass, who had brought me the day before, waiting for me at the door; and I mounted, and returned with him to the Khan of Mesrur,

where I alighted, and gave to him half a piece of gold, saying to him, Come hither at sunset. He replied, On the head be thy command.

I entered the Khan, and ate my breakfast, and then went forth to collect the price of my stuffs ; after which I returned. I had prepared for my wife a roasted lamb, and purchased some sweetmeat ; and I now called the porter, described to him the house, and gave him his hire. Having done this, I occupied myself again with my business until sunset, when the owner of the ass came, and I took fifty pieces of gold, and put them into a handkerchief. Entering the house, I found that they had wiped the marble and polished the vessels of copper and brass, and filled the lamps and lighted the candles, and dished the supper and strained the wine ; and when my wife saw me, she threw her arms around my neck, and said, Thou hast made me desolate by thine absence ! The tables were then placed before us, and we ate until we were satisfied, and the slave-girls took away the first table, and placed before us the wine ; and we sat drinking, and eating of the dried fruits, and making merry, until midnight. We then slept until morning, when I arose and handed her the fifty pieces of gold as before, and left her.

Thus I continued to do for a long time, until I passed the night and awoke possessing not a piece of silver nor one of gold ; and I said within myself, This is of the work of the Devil ! And I repeated these verses :—

Poverty causeth the lustre of a man to grow dim, like the yellowness of the setting sun.

When absent, he is not remembered among mankind ; and when present, he shareth not their pleasures.

In the market-streets he shunneth notice ; and in desert places he poureth forth his tears.

By Allah ! a man, among his own relations, when afflicted with poverty, is as a stranger !

With these reflections I walked forth into Beyn el-Kasreyn, and proceeded thence to Bab Zuweyleh, where I found the people crowding together, so that the gate was stopped up by their number ; and, as destiny willed, I saw there a trooper, and, unintentionally pressing against him, my hand came in contact with his pocket, and I felt it, and found that

it contained a purse ; and I caught hold of the purse, and took it from his pocket. But the trooper felt that his pocket was lightened, and, putting his hand into it, found nothing ; upon which he looked aside at me, and raised his hand with the mace, and struck me upon my head. I fell to the ground, and the people surrounded us, and seized the bridle of the trooper's horse, saying, On account of the crowd dost thou strike this young man such a blow ? But he called out to them and said, This is a robber ! On hearing this I feared. The people around me said, This is a comely young man, and hath taken nothing. While some, however, believed this, others disbelieved ; and after many words, the people dragged me along, desiring to liberate me : but, as it was predestined, there came at this moment the Wali and other magistrates entering the gate, and, seeing the people surrounding me and the trooper, the Wali said, What is the news ? The trooper answered, By Allah, O Emir, this is a robber : I had in my pocket a blue purse containing twenty pieces of gold ; and he took it while I was pressed by the crowd.—Was any one with thee ? asked the Wali. The trooper answered, No. And the Wali called out to the chief of his servants, saying, Seize him and search him. So he seized me ; and protection was withdrawn from me ; and the Wali said to him, Strip him of all that is upon him. And when he did so, they found the purse in my clothes : and the Wali, taking it, counted the money, and found it to be twenty pieces of gold, as the trooper had said ; whereupon he was enraged, and called out to his attendants, saying, Bring him forward. They, therefore, brought me before him, and he said to me, O young man, tell the truth. Didst thou steal this purse ?—And I hung down my head towards the ground, saying within myself, If I answer that I did not steal it, it will be useless, for he hath produced it from my clothes ; and if I say, I stole it, I fall into trouble. I then raised my head, and said, Yes, I took it. And when the Wali heard these words, he wondered, and called witnesses, who presented themselves, and gave their testimony to my confession.—All this took place at Bab Zuweyleh. —The Wali then ordered the executioner to cut off my hand ; and he cut off my right hand ; but the heart of the trooper

was moved with compassion for me, and he interceded for me that I should not be killed : so the Wali left me and departed. The people however continued around me, and gave me to drink a cup of wine ; and the trooper gave me the purse, saying, Thou art a comely youth, and it is not fit that thou shouldst be a thief. And I took it from him, and addressed him with these verses :—

By Allah ! good sir, I was not a robber ; nor was I a thief, O best of mankind !

But fortune's vicissitudes overthrew me suddenly, and anxiety and trouble and poverty overpowered me.

I cast it not ; but it was the Deity who cast an arrow that threw down the kingly diadem from my head.

The trooper then left me and departed, after having given me the purse, and I went my way ; but first I wrapped my hand in a piece of rag, and put it in my bosom. My condition thus altered, and my countenance pallid in consequence of my sufferings, I walked to the Ka'ah, and, in a disordered state of mind, threw myself upon the bed. My wife, seeing my complexion thus changed, said to me, What hath pained thee, and wherefore do I see thee thus altered ? I answered her, My head acheth, and I am not well. And on hearing this she was vexed, and became ill on my account, and said, Burn not my heart, O my master ! Sit up, and raise thy head, and tell me what hath happened to thee this day ; for I read a tale in thy face.—Abstain from speaking to me, I replied. And she wept, and said, It seemeth that thou art tired of us ; for I see thee to be conducting thyself in a manner contrary to thy usual habit. Then she wept again, and continued addressing me, though I made her no reply, until the approach of night, when she placed some food before me ; but I abstained from it, fearing that she should see me eat with my left hand, and said, I have no desire to eat at present. She then said again, Tell me what hath happened to thee this day, and wherefore I see thee anxious and broken-hearted. I answered, I will presently tell thee at my leisure. And she put the wine towards me, saying, Take it ; for it will dispel thine anxiety ; and thou must drink, and tell me thy story. I replied, therefore, If it must be so, give me to drink with thy hand.

And she filled a cup and drank it; and then filled it again and handed it to me, and I took it from her with my left hand, and, while tears ran from my eyes, I repeated these verses:—

When God willeth an event to befall a man who is endowed with reason and hearing and sight,
He deafeneth his ears, and blindeth his heart, and draweth his reason from him as a hair.
Till, having fulfilled his purpose against him, He restoreth him his reason that he may be admonished.

Having thus said, I wept again; and when she saw me do so, she uttered a loud cry, and said, What is the reason of thy weeping? Thou hast burned my heart! And wherefore didst thou take the cup with thy left hand?—I answered her, I have a boil upon my right hand.—Then put it forth, said she, that I may open it for thee.—It is not yet, I replied, the proper time for opening it; and continue not to ask me; for I will not put it forth at present. I then drank the contents of the cup, and she continued to hand me the wine until intoxication overcame me, and I fell asleep in the place where I was sitting; upon which she discovered that my right arm was without a hand, and, searching me, saw the purse containing the gold.

Grief, such as none else experienceth, overcame her at the sight; and she suffered incessant torment on my account until the morning, when I awoke, and found that she had prepared for me a dish composed of four boiled fowls, which she placed before me. She then gave me to drink a cup of wine; and I ate and drank, and put down the purse, and was about to depart; but she said, Whither wouldest thou go? I answered, To such a place, to dispel somewhat of the anxiety which oppresseth my heart.—Go not, said she; but rather sit down again. So I sat down, and she said to me, Hath thy love of me become so excessive that thou hast expended all thy wealth upon me, and lost thy hand? I take thee, then, as witness against me, and God also is witness, that I will never desert thee; and thou shalt see the truth of my words.—Immediately, therefore, she sent for witnesses, who came; and she said to them, Write my contract of marriage to this young man, and bear witness

that I have received the dowry. And they did as she desired them; after which she said, Bear witness that all my property which is in this chest, and all my memluks and female slaves, belong to this young man. Accordingly, they declared themselves witnesses of her declaration, and I accepted the property, and they departed after they had received their fees. She then took me by my hand, and, having led me to a closet, opened a large chest, and said to me, See what is contained in this chest. I looked, therefore; and lo, it was full of handkerchiefs; and she said, This is thy property, which I have received from thee: for every time that thou gavest me a handkerchief containing fifty pieces of gold, I wrapped it up, and threw it into this chest: take, then, thy property; for God hath restored it to thee, and thou art now of high estate. Fate hath afflicted thee on my account so that thou hast lost thy right hand, and I am unable to compensate thee: if I should sacrifice my life, it would be but a small thing, and thy generosity would still have surpassed mine.—She then added, Now take possession of thy property. So I received it; and she transferred the contents of her chest to mine, adding her property to mine which I had given her. My heart rejoiced, my anxiety ceased, and I approached and kissed her, and made myself merry by drinking with her; after which she said again, Thou hast sacrificed all thy wealth and thy hand through love of me, and how can I compensate thee? By Allah, if I gave my life for love of thee, it were but a small thing, and I should not do justice to thy claims upon me.—She then wrote a deed of gift transferring to me all her apparel, and her ornaments of gold and jewels, and her houses and other possessions; and she passed that night in grief on my account, having heard my relation of the accident that had befallen me.

Thus we remained less than a month, during which time she became more and more infirm and disordered; and she endured no more than fifty days before she was numbered among the people of the other world. So I prepared her funeral, and deposited her body in the earth, and having caused recitations of the Kur'an to be performed for her, and given a considerable sum of money in alms for her

sake, returned from the tomb. I found that she had possessed abundant wealth, and houses and lands, and among her property were the store-rooms of sesame of which I sold to thee the contents of one; and I was not prevented from settling with thee during this period but by my being busied in selling the remainder, the price of which I have not yet entirely received. Now I desire of thee that thou wilt not oppose me in that which I am about to say to thee; since I have eaten of thy food: I give thee the price of the sesame, which is in thy hands.—This which I have told thee was the cause of my eating with my left hand.

I replied, Thou hast treated me with kindness and generosity:—and he then said, Thou must travel with me to my country; for I have bought merchandise of Cairo and Alexandria. Wilt thou accompany me?—I answered, Yes:—and promised him that I would be ready by the first day of the following month. So I sold all that I possessed, and, having bought merchandise with the produce, travelled with the young man to this thy country, where he sold his merchandise and bought other in its stead, after which he returned to the land of Egypt: but it was my lot to remain here, and to experience that which hath befallen me this night during my absence from my native country.—Now is not this, O King of the age, more wonderful than the story of the humpback?

The King replied, Ye must be hanged, all of you!—And upon this, the Sultan's steward advanced towards the King, and said, If thou permit me, I will relate to thee a story that I happened to hear just before I found this humpback; and if it be more wonderful than the events relating to him, wilt thou grant us our lives?—The King answered, Tell thy story:—and he began thus:—

THE STORY TOLD BY THE SULTAN'S STEWARD

I was last night with a party who celebrated a recitation of the Kur'an, for which purpose they had assembled the professors of religion and law; and when these reciters had

accomplished their task, the servants spread a repast, comprising among other dishes a zirbajeh. We approached, therefore, to eat of the zirbajeh; but one of the company drew back, and refused to partake of it: we conjured him; yet he swore that he would not eat of it: and we pressed him again; but he said, Press me not; for I have suffered enough from eating of this dish. And when we had finished, we said to him, By Allah, tell us the reason of thine abstaining from eating of this zirbajeh. He replied, Because I cannot eat of it unless I wash my hands forty times with kali, and forty times with cyperus, and forty times with soap; altogether, a hundred and twenty times. And upon this, the giver of the entertainment ordered his servants, and they brought water and the other things which this man required: so he washed his hands as he had described, and advanced, though with disgust, and, having seated himself, stretched forth his hand as one in fear, and put it into the zirbajeh, and began to eat, while we regarded him with the utmost wonder. His hand trembled, and when he put it forth, we saw that his thumb was cut off, and that he ate with his four fingers: we therefore said to him, We conjure thee, by Allah, to tell us how was thy thumb maimed: was it thus created by God, or hath some accident happened to it?—O my brothers, he answered, not only have I lost this thumb, but also the thumb of the other hand; and each of my feet is in like manner deprived of the great toe: but see ye:—and, so saying, he uncovered the stump of the thumb of his other hand, and we found it like the right; and so also his feet, destitute of the great toes. At the sight of this, our wonder increased, and we said to him, We are impatient to hear thy story, and thine account of the cause of the amputation of thy thumbs and great toes, and the reason of thy washing thy hands a hundred and twenty times. So he said,—

Know that my father was a great merchant, the chief of the merchants of the city of Baghdad in the time of the Khalifeh Harun Er-Rashid; but he was ardently addicted to the drinking of wine, and hearing the lute; and when he died, he left nothing. I buried him, and caused recitations of the Kur'an to be performed for him, and, after I had

mourned for him days and nights, I opened his shop, and found that he had left in it but few goods, and that his debts were many: however, I induced his creditors to wait, and calmed their minds, and betook myself to selling and buying from week to week, and so paying the creditors.

Thus I continued to do for a considerable period, until I had discharged all the debts and increased my capital; and as I was sitting one day, I beheld a young lady, than whom my eye had never beheld any more beautiful, decked with magnificent ornaments and apparel, riding on a mule, with a slave before her and a slave behind her; and she stopped the mule at the entrance of the market-street, and entered, followed by a eunuch, who said to her, O my mistress, enter, but inform no one who thou art, lest thou open the fire of indignation upon us. The eunuch then further cautioned her; and when she looked at the shops of the merchants, she found none more handsome than mine; so, when she arrived before me, with the eunuch following her, she sat down upon the seat of my shop, and saluted me; and I never heard speech more charming than hers, or words more sweet. She then drew aside the veil from her face, and I directed at her a glance which drew from me a sigh; my heart was captivated by her love, and I continued repeatedly gazing at her face, and recited these two verses:—

Say to the beauty in the dove-coloured veil, Death would indeed be welcome to relieve me from thy torment.

Favour me with a visit, that so I may live. See, I stretch forth my hand to accept thy liberality.

And when she had heard my recitation of them, she answered thus:—

May I lose my heart if it cease to love you! For verily my heart loveth none but you.

If my eye regard any charms but yours, may the sight of you never rejoice it after absence!

She then said to me, O youth, hast thou any handsome stuffs?—O my mistress, I answered, thy slave is a poor man; but wait until the other merchants open their shops, and then I will bring thee what thou desirest. So I conversed with her, drowned in the sea of her love, and

bewildered by my passion for her, until the merchants had opened their shops, when I arose, and procured all that she wanted, and the price of these stuffs was five thousand pieces of silver: and she handed them all to the eunuch, who took them; after which, they both went out from the market-street, and the slaves brought to her the mule, and she mounted, without telling me whence she was, and I was ashamed to mention the subject to her: consequently, I became answerable for the price to the merchants, incurring a debt of five thousand pieces of silver.

I went home, intoxicated with her love, and they placed before me the supper, and I ate a morsel; but reflections upon her beauty and loveliness prevented my eating more. I desired to sleep, but sleep came not to me; and in this condition I remained for a week. The merchants demanded of me their money; but I prevailed upon them to wait another week; and after this week, the lady came again, riding upon a mule, and attended by a eunuch and two other slaves; and, having saluted me, said, O my master, we have been tardy in bringing to thee the price of the stuffs: bring now the money-changer, and receive it. So the money-changer came, and the eunuch gave him the money, and I took it, and sat conversing with her until the market was replenished, and the merchants opened their shops, when she said to me, Procure for me such and such things. Accordingly, I procured for her what she desired of the merchants, and she took the goods and departed without saying anything to me respecting the price. When she had gone, therefore, I repented of what I had done; for I had procured for her what she demanded for the price of a thousand pieces of gold; and as soon as she had disappeared from my sight, I said within myself, What kind of love is this? She hath brought me five thousand pieces of silver, and taken goods for a thousand pieces of gold!—I feared that the result would be my bankruptcy and the loss of the property of others, and said, The merchants know none but me, and this woman is no other than a cheat, who hath imposed upon me by her beauty and loveliness: seeing me to be young, she hath laughed at me, and I asked her not where was her residence.

I remained in a state of perplexity, and her absence was prolonged more than a month. Meanwhile the merchants demanded of me their money, and so pressed me that I offered my possessions for sale, and was on the brink of ruin; but as I was sitting absorbed in reflection, suddenly she alighted at the gate of the market-street, and came in to me. As soon as I beheld her, my solicitude ceased, and I forgot the trouble which I had suffered. She approached, and addressed me with her agreeable conversation, and said, Produce the scales, and weigh thy money:—and she gave me the price of the goods which she had taken, with a surplus; after which, she amused herself by talking with me, and I almost died with joy and happiness. She then said to me, Hast thou a wife? I answered, No: for I am not acquainted with any woman:—and wept. So she asked me, What causeth thee to weep? And I answered, A thought that hath come into my mind:—and, taking some pieces of gold, gave them to the eunuch, requesting him to grant me his mediation in the affair; upon which he laughed, and said, She is in love with thee more than thou art with her, and hath no want of the stuffs, but hath done this only from her love of thee: propose to her, therefore, what thou wilt; for she will not oppose thee in that which thou wilt say. Now she observed me giving the pieces of gold to the eunuch, and returned, and resumed her seat; and I said to her, Shew favour to thy slave, and pardon me for that which I am about to say. I then acquainted her with the feelings of my heart, and my declaration pleased her, and she consented to my proposal, saying, This eunuch will come with my letter; and do thou what he shall tell thee;—and she arose, and departed.

I went to the merchants, and delivered to them their money, and all profited except myself; for when she left me I mourned for the interruption of our intercourse, and I slept not during the whole of the next night: but a few days after, her eunuch came to me, and I received him with honour, and asked him respecting his mistress. He answered, She is sick:—and I said to him, Disclose to me her history. He replied, The lady Zubeydeh, the wife of Harun Er-Rashid, brought up this damsel, and she is one of her slaves; she

had desired of her mistress to be allowed the liberty of going out and returning at pleasure, and the latter gave her permission: she continued, therefore, to do so until she became a chief confident; after which, she spoke of thee to her mistress, and begged that she would marry her to thee: but her mistress said, I will not do it until I see this young man, and if he have a desire for thee, I will marry thee to him. We therefore wish to introduce thee immediately into the palace; and if thou enter without any one's having knowledge of thy presence, thou wilt succeed in accomplishing thy marriage with her; but if thy plot be discovered, thy head will be struck off. What, then, sayest thou?—I answered, Good: I will go with thee, and await the event that shall befall me there.—As soon, then, as this next night shall have closed in, said the eunuch, repair to the mosque which the lady Zubeydeh hath built on the bank of the Tigris, and there say thy prayers, and pass the night.—Most willingly, I replied.

Accordingly, when the time of nightfall arrived, I went to the mosque, and said my prayers there, and passed the night; and as soon as the morning began to dawn, I saw two eunuchs approaching in a small boat, conveying some empty chests, which they brought into the mosque. One of them then departed, and the other remained; and I looked attentively at him, and lo, it was he who had been our intermediary: and soon after, the damsel, my companion, came up to us. I rose to her when she approached, and embraced her; and she kissed me, and wept: and after we had conversed together for a little while, she took me and placed me in a chest, and locked it upon me.⁴¹ The slaves then brought a quantity of stuffs, and filled with them the other chests, which they locked, and conveyed, together with the chest in which I was enclosed, to the boat, accompanied by the damsel; and having embarked them, they plied the oars, and proceeded to the palace of the honoured lady Zubeydeh. The intoxication of love now ceased in me, and reflection came in its place: I repented of what I had done, and prayed God to deliver me from my dangerous predicament.

Meanwhile, they arrived at the gate of the Khalifeh,

where they landed, and took out all the chests, and conveyed them into the palace: but the chief of the door-keepers, who had been asleep when they arrived, was awoke by the sounds of their voices, and cried out to the damsels, saying, The chests must be opened, that I may see what is in them:—and he arose, and placed his hand upon the chest in which I was hidden. My reason abandoned me, my heart almost burst from my body, and my limbs trembled; but the damsels said, These are the chests of the lady Zubeydeh, and if thou open them and turn them over, she will be incensed against thee, and we shall all perish. They contain nothing but clothes dyed of various colours, except this chest upon which thou hast put thy hand, in which there are also some bottles filled with the water of Zemzem,* and if any of the water run out upon the clothes it will spoil their colours. Now I have advised thee, and it is for thee to decide: so do what thou wilt.—When he heard, therefore, these words, he said to her, Take the chests, and pass on:—and the eunuchs immediately took them up, and, with the damsels, conveyed them into the palace: but in an instant, I heard a person crying out, and saying, The Khalifeh! The Khalifeh!

I was bereft of my reason, and seized with a colic from excessive fear; I almost died, and my limbs were affected with a violent shaking. The Khalifeh cried out to the damsels, saying to her, What are these chests? She answered, O my lord (may God exalt thy dominion!), these chests contain clothes of my mistress Zubeydeh.—Open them, said the Khalifeh, that I may see the clothes.—When I heard this, I felt sure of my destruction. The damsels could not disobey his command; but she replied, O Prince of the Faithful, there is nothing in these chests but clothes of the lady Zubeydeh, and she hath commanded me not to open them to any one. The Khalifeh, however, said, The chests must be opened, all of them, that I may see their contents:—and immediately he called out to the eunuchs to bring them before him. I therefore felt certain that I was on the point of destruction. They then brought before him chest after chest, and opened each to him, and he examined

* The well at Mekkeh, believed to possess miraculous virtues.

the contents ; and when they brought forward the chest in which I was enclosed, I bade adieu to life, and prepared myself for death ; but as the eunuchs were about to open it, the damsel said, O Prince of the Faithful, verily this chest containeth things especially appertaining to women ; and it is proper, therefore, that it should be opened before the lady Zubeydeh :—and when the Khalifeh heard her words, he ordered the eunuchs to convey all the chests into the interior of the palace. The damsel then hastened, and ordered two eunuchs to carry away the chest in which I was hidden, and they took it to an inner chamber, and went their way : whereupon she quickly opened it, and made a sign to me to come out : so I did as she desired, and entered a closet that was before me, and she locked the door upon me, and closed the chest : and when the eunuchs had brought in all the chests, and had gone back, she opened the door of the closet, and said, Thou hast nothing to fear ! May God refresh thine eye ! Come forth now, and go up with me, that thou mayest have the happiness of kissing the ground before the lady Zubeydeh.

I therefore went with her, and beheld twenty other female slaves, high-bosomed virgins, and among them was the lady Zubeydeh, who was scarcely able to walk from the weight of the robes and ornaments with which she was decked. As she approached, the female slaves dispersed from around her, and I advanced to her, and kissed the ground before her. She made a sign to me to sit down : so I seated myself before her ; and she began to ask me questions respecting my condition and lineage ; to all of which I gave such answers that she was pleased, and said, By Allah, the care which we have bestowed on the education of this damsel hath not been in vain. She then said to me, Know that this damsel is esteemed by us as though she were really our child, and she is a trust committed to thy care by God. Upon this, therefore, I again kissed the ground before her, well pleased to marry the damsel ; after which, she commanded me to remain with them ten days. Accordingly, I continued with them during this period ; but I knew nothing meanwhile of the damsel ; certain of the maids only bringing me my dinner and supper, as my servants.

After this, however, the lady Zubeydeh asked permission of her husband, the Prince of the Faithful, to marry her maid, and he granted her request, and ordered that ten thousand pieces of gold should be given to her.

The lady Zubeydeh, therefore, sent for the Kadi and witnesses, and they wrote my contract of marriage to the damsel ; and the maids then prepared sweetmeats and exquisite dishes, and distributed them in all the apartments. Thus they continued to do for a period of ten more days ; and after the twenty days had passed, they conducted the damsel into the bath, preparatively to my being introduced to her as her husband. They then brought to me a repast comprising a basin of zirbajeh sweetened with sugar, perfumed with rose-water infused with musk, and containing different kinds of fricandoed fowls and a variety of other ingredients, such as astonished the mind ; and, by Allah, when this repast was brought, I instantly commenced upon the zirbajeh, and ate of it as much as satisfied me, and wiped my hand, but forgot to wash it. I remained sitting until it became dark ; when the maids lighted the candles, and the singing-girls approached with the tambourines, and they continued to display the bride, and to give presents of gold, until she had perambulated the whole of the palace ; after which, they brought her to me, and disrobed her ; and as soon as I was left alone with her, I threw my arms around her neck, scarcely believing in our union : but as I did so, she perceived the smell of the zirbajeh from my hand, and immediately uttered a loud cry : whereupon the female slaves ran in to her from every quarter.

I was violently agitated, not knowing what was the matter ; and the slaves who had come in said to her, What hath happened to thee, O our sister ?—Take away from me, she exclaimed to them, this madman, whom I imagined to be a man of sense !—What indication of my insanity hath appeared to thee ? I asked. Thou madman, said she, wherefore hast thou eaten of the zirbajeh, and not washed thy hand ? By Allah, I will not accept thee for thy want of sense, and thy disgusting conduct !—And so saying, she took from her side a whip, and beat me with it upon my back until I became insensible from the number of the stripes.

She then said to the other maids, Take him to the magistrate of the city police, that he may cut off his hand with which he ate the zirbajeh without washing it afterwards. On hearing this, I exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God ! Wilt thou cut off my hand on account of my eating a zirbajeh and neglecting to wash it?—And the maids who were present entreated her, saying to her, O our sister, be not angry with him for what he hath done this time. But she replied, By Allah, I must cut off something from his extremities ! And immediately she departed, and was absent from me ten days : after which, she came again, and said to me, O thou black-faced ! Am I not worthy of thee ? How didst thou dare to eat the zirbajeh and not wash thy hand?—And she called to the maids, who bound my hands behind me, and she took a sharp razor, and cut off both my thumbs and both my great toes, as ye see, O companions ; and I swooned away. She then sprinkled upon my wounds some powder, by means of which the blood was stanched ; and I said, I will not eat of a zirbajeh as long as I live unless I wash my hands forty times with kali and forty times with cyperus and forty times with soap :—and she exacted of me an oath that I would not eat of this dish unless I washed my hands as I have described to you. Therefore, when this zirbajeh was brought, my colour changed, and I said within myself, This was the cause of the cutting off of my thumbs and great toes :—so, when ye compelled me, I said, I must fulfil the oath which I have sworn.

I then said to him (continued the Sultan's steward), And what happened to thee after that ? He answered, When I had thus sworn to her, she was appeased, and I was admitted into her favour ; and we lived happily together for a considerable time : after which she said, The people of the Khalifeh's palace know not that thou hast resided here with me, and no strange man beside thee hath entered it ; nor didst thou enter but through the assistance of the lady Zubeydeh. She then gave me fifty thousand pieces of gold, and said to me, Take these pieces of gold, and go forth and buy for us a spacious house. So I went forth, and purchased a handsome and spacious house, and removed thither all the riches that she possessed, and all that she had treasured up,

and her dresses and rarities.—This was the cause of the amputation of my thumbs and great toes.—So we ate (said the Sultan's steward), and departed; and after this, the accident with the humpback happened to me: this is all my story; and peace be on thee.

The King said, This is not more pleasant than the story of the humpback: nay, the story of the humpback is more pleasant than this; and ye must all of you be crucified.—The Jew, however, then came forward, and, having kissed the ground, said, O King of the age, I will relate to thee a story more wonderful than that of the humpback:—and the King said, Relate thy story. So he commenced thus:—

THE STORY TOLD BY THE JEWISH PHYSICIAN

The most wonderful of the events that happened to me in my younger days was this:—I was residing in Damascus, where I learnt and practised my art; and while I was thus occupied, one day there came to me a memluk from the house of the governor of the city: so I went forth with him, and accompanied him to the abode of the governor. I entered, and beheld, at the upper end of a saloon, a couch of alabaster overlaid with plates of gold, upon which was reclining a sick man: he was young; and a person more comely had not been seen in his age. Seating myself at his head, I ejaculated a prayer for his restoration; and he made a sign to me with his eye. I then said to him, O my master, stretch forth to me thy hand:—whereupon he put forth to me his left hand; and I was surprised at this, and said within myself, What self-conceit! I felt his pulse, however, and wrote a prescription for him, and continued to visit him for a period of ten days, until he recovered his strength; when he entered the bath, and washed himself, and came forth: and the governor conferred upon me a handsome dress of honour, and appointed me superintendent of the hospital of Damascus. But when I went with him into the bath, which they had cleared of all other visitors for us alone, and the

servants had brought the clothes, and taken away those which he had pulled off within, I perceived that his right hand had been cruelly amputated ; at the sight of which I wondered, and grieved for him ; and looking at his skin, I observed upon him marks of beating with mikra'ahs, which caused me to wonder more. The young man then turned towards me, and said, O doctor of the age, wonder not at my case ; for I will relate to thee my story when we have gone out from the bath :—and when we had gone forth, and arrived at the house, and had eaten some food, and rested, he said to me, Hast thou a desire to divert thyself in the supper-room ? I answered, Yes :—and immediately he ordered the slaves to take up thither the furniture, and to roast a lamb and bring us some fruit. So the slaves did as he commanded them : and when they had brought the fruit, and we had eaten, I said to him, Relate to me thy story :—and he replied, O doctor of the age, listen to the relation of the events which have befallen me.

Know that I am of the children of El-Mosil. My paternal grandfather died leaving ten male children, one of whom was my father : he was the eldest of them ; and they all grew up and married ; and my father was blest with me ; but none of his nine brothers was blest with children. So I grew up among my uncles, who delighted in me exceedingly ; and when I had attained to manhood, I was one day with my father in the chief mosque of El-Mosil. The day was Friday ; and we performed the congregational prayers, and all the people went out, except my father and my uncles, who sat conversing together respecting the wonders of various countries, and the strange sights of different cities, until they mentioned Egypt ; when one of my uncles said, The travellers assert, that there is not on the face of the earth a more agreeable country than Egypt with its Nile :⁶²—and my father added, He who hath not seen Cairo hath not seen the world : its soil is gold ; its Nile is a wonder ; its women are like the black-eyed virgins of Paradise ; its houses are palaces ; and its air is temperate ; its odour surpassing that of aloes-wood, and cheering the heart : and how can Cairo be otherwise when it is the metropolis of the world ?⁶³ Did ye see its gardens in the

evening (he continued), with the shade obliquely extending over them, ye would behold a wonder, and yield with ecstasy to their attractions.

When I heard these descriptions of Egypt, my mind became wholly engaged by reflections upon that country; and after they had departed to their homes, I passed the night sleepless from my excessive longing towards it, and neither food nor drink was pleasant to me. A few days after, my uncles prepared to journey thither, and I wept before my father that I might go with them, so that he prepared a stock of merchandise for me, and I departed in their company; but he said to them, Suffer him not to enter Egypt, but leave him at Damascus, that he may there sell his merchandise.

I took leave of my father, and we set forth from El-Mosil, and continued our journey until we arrived at Aleppo, where we remained some days; after which we proceeded thence until we came to Damascus; and we beheld it to be a city with trees and rivers and fruits and birds, as though it were a paradise, containing fruits of every kind. We took lodgings in one of the Khans, and my uncles remained there until they had sold and bought; and they also sold my merchandise, gaining, for every piece of silver, five, so that I rejoiced at my profit. My uncles then left me, and repaired to Egypt, and I remained, and took up my abode in a handsome Ka'ah, such as the tongue cannot describe; the monthly rent of which was two pieces of gold.

Here I indulged myself with eating and drinking, squandering away the money that was in my possession; and as I was sitting one day at the door of the Ka'ah, a damsel approached me, attired in clothing of the richest description, such as I had never seen surpassed in costliness, and I invited her to come in; whereupon, without hesitation, she entered; and I was delighted at her compliance, and closed the door upon us both. She then uncovered her face, and took off her izar, and I found her to be so surprisingly beautiful that love for her took possession of my heart: so I went and brought a repast consisting of the most delicious viands and fruit and everything else that was requisite for her entertainment, and we ate and sported

together ; after which, we drank till we were intoxicated, and fell asleep, and so we remained until the morning, when I handed her ten pieces of gold ; but she swore that she would not accept them from me, and said, Expect me again, O my beloved, after three days : at the hour of sunset I will be with thee : and do thou prepare for us, with these pieces of gold, a repast similar to this which we have just enjoyed. She then gave me ten pieces of gold, and took leave of me, and departed, taking my reason with her. And after the three days had expired, she came again, decked with embroidered stuffs and ornaments and other attire more magnificent than those which she wore on the former occasion. I had prepared for her what was required previously to her arrival ; so we now ate and drank and fell asleep as before ; and in the morning she gave me again ten pieces of gold, promising to return to me after three more days. I therefore made ready what was requisite, and after the three days she came attired in a dress still more magnificent than the first and second, and said to me, O my master, am I beautiful ?—Yea, verily, I answered.—Wilt thou give me leave, she rejoined, to bring with me a damsel more beautiful than myself, and younger than I, that she may sport with us, and we may make merry with her ? For she hath requested that she may accompany me, and pass the night in frolicking with us.—And so saying, she gave me twenty pieces of gold, desiring me to prepare a more plentiful repast, on account of the lady who was to come with her ; after which, she bade me farewell, and departed.

Accordingly, on the fourth day, I procured what was requisite, as usual, and soon after sunset she came, accompanied by a female wrapped in an izar, and they entered, and seated themselves. I was rejoiced, and I lighted the candles, and welcomed them with joy and exultation. They then took off their outer garments, and when the new damsel uncovered her face, I perceived that she was like the full moon : I had never beheld a person more beautiful. I arose immediately, and placed before them the food and drink, and we ate and drank, while I continued caressing the new damsel, and filling the wine-cup for her, and drinking with

her: but the first lady was affected with a secret jealousy.—By Allah, she said, verily this girl is beautiful! Is she not more charming than I?—Yea, indeed, I answered.—Soon after this, I fell asleep, and when I awoke in the morning, I found my hand defiled with blood, and, opening my eyes, perceived that the sun had risen; so I attempted to rouse the damsel, my new companion, whereupon her head rolled from her body. The other damsel was gone, and I concluded, therefore, that she had done this from her jealousy; and after reflecting a while, I arose, and took off my clothes, and dug a hole in the Ka'ah, in which I deposited the murdered damsel, afterwards covering her remains with earth, and replacing the marble pavement as it was before. I then dressed myself again, and, taking the remainder of my money, went forth, and repaired to the owner of the Ka'ah, and paid him a year's rent, saying to him, I am about to journey to my uncles in Egypt.

So I departed to Egypt, where I met with my uncles, and they were rejoiced to see me. I found that they had concluded the sale of their merchandise, and they said to me, What is the cause of thy coming? I answered, I had a longing desire to be with you, and feared that my money would not suffice me.—For a year I remained with them, enjoying the pleasures of Egypt and its Nile; and I dipped my hand into the residue of my money, and expended it prodigally in eating and drinking until near the time of my uncles' departure, when I fled from them: so they said, Probably he hath gone before us and returned to Damascus:—and they departed. I then came forth from my concealment, and remained in Cairo three years, squandering away my money until scarcely any of it remained: but meanwhile I sent every year the rent of the Ka'ah at Damascus to its owner: and after the three years my heart became contracted, for nothing remained in my possession but the rent for the year.

I therefore journeyed back to Damascus, and alighted at the Ka'ah. The owner was rejoiced to see me, and I entered it, and cleansed it of the blood of the murdered damsel, and, removing a cushion, I found, beneath this, the necklace that she had worn that night. I took it up and

examined it, and wept a while. After this I remained in the house two days, and on the third day I entered the bath, and changed my clothes. I now had no money left; and I went one day to the market, where (the Devil suggesting it to me, in order to accomplish the purpose of destiny) I handed the necklace of jewels to a broker; and he rose to me, and seated me by his side: then having waited until the market was replenished, he took it, and announced it for sale secretly, without my knowledge. The price bidden for it amounted to two thousand pieces of gold; but he came to me and said, This necklace is of brass, of the counterfeit manufacture of the Franks, and its price hath amounted to a thousand pieces of silver. I answered him, Yes: we had made it for a woman, merely to laugh at her, and my wife has inherited it, and we desire to sell it: go, therefore, and receive the thousand pieces of silver. Now when the broker heard this, he perceived that the affair was suspicious, and went and gave the necklace to the chief of the market, who took it to the Wali, and said to him, This necklace was stolen from me, and we have found the thief, clad in the dress of the sons of the merchants. And before I knew what had happened, the officers had surrounded me, and they took me to the Wali, who questioned me respecting the necklace. I told him, therefore, the same story that I had told to the broker; but he laughed, and said, This is not the truth:—and instantly his people stripped me of my outer clothing, and beat me with mikra'ahs all over my body, until, through the torture that I suffered from the blows, I said, I stole it;—reflecting that it was better I should say I stole it, than confess that its owner was murdered in my abode; for then they would kill me to avenge her: and as soon as I had said so, they cut off my hand, and scalded the stump with boiling oil, and I swooned away. They then gave me to drink some wine, by swallowing which I recovered my senses; and I took my amputated hand, and returned to the Ka'ah; but its owner said to me, Since this hath happened to thee, leave the Ka'ah, and look for another abode; for thou art accused of an unlawful act.—O my master, I replied, give me two or three days' delay that I may seek for a lodging:—and he assented to

this, and departed and left me. So I remained alone, and sat weeping, and saying, How can I return to my family with my hand cut off? He who cut it off knoweth not that I am innocent: perhaps, then, God will bring about some event for my relief.

I sat weeping violently; and when the owner of the Ka'ah had departed from me, excessive grief overcame me, and I was sick for two days; and on the third day, suddenly the owner of the Ka'ah came to me, with some officers of the police, and the chief of the market, and accused me again of stealing the necklace. So I went out to them, and said, What is the news?—whereupon, without granting me a moment's delay, they bound my arms behind me, and put a chain around my neck, saying to me, The necklace which was in thy possession hath proved to be the property of the governor of Damascus, its Wezir and its Ruler: it hath been lost from the governor's house for a period of three years, and with it was his daughter.—When I heard these words from them, my limbs trembled, and I said within myself, They will kill me! My death is inevitable! By Allah, I must relate my story to the governor; and if he please he will kill me, or if he please he will pardon me.—And when we arrived at the governor's abode, and they had placed me before him, and he beheld me, he said, Is this he who stole the necklace and went out to sell it? Verily ye have cut off his hand wrongfully.—He then ordered that the chief of the market should be imprisoned, and said to him, Give to this person the compensatory fine for his hand, or I will hang thee and seize all thy property. And he called out to his attendants, who took him and dragged him away.

I was now left with the governor alone, after they had, by his permission, loosed the chain from my neck, and untied the cords which bound my arms; and the governor, looking towards me, said to me, O my son, tell me thy story, and speak truth. How did this necklace come into thy possession?—So I replied, O my lord, I will tell thee the truth:—and I related to him all that had happened to me with the first damsel, and how she had brought to me the second, and murdered her from jealousy; on hearing which, he shook his head, and covered his face with his

handkerchief, and wept. Then looking towards me, he said, Know, O my son, that the elder damsel was my daughter : I kept her closely ; and when she had attained a fit age for marriage, I sent her to the son of her uncle in Cairo ; but he died, and she returned to me, having learnt habits of profligacy from the inhabitants of that city : so she visited thee four times ; and on the fourth occasion, she brought to thee her younger sister. They were sisters by the same mother, and much attached to each other ; and when the event which thou hast related occurred to the elder, she imparted her secret to her sister, who asked my permission to go out with her ; after which the elder returned alone ; and when I questioned her respecting her sister, I found her weeping for her, and she answered, I know no tidings of her :—but she afterwards informed her mother, secretly, of the murder which she had committed ; and her mother privately related the affair to me ; and she continued to weep for her incessantly, saying, By Allah, I will not cease to weep for her until I die. Thy account, O my son, is true ; for I knew the affair before thou toldest it me. See then, O my son, what hath happened : and now I request of thee that thou wilt not oppose me in that which I am about to say ; and it is this :—I desire to marry thee to my youngest daughter ; for she is not of the same mother as they were : she is a virgin, and I will receive from thee no dowry, but will assign to you both an allowance ; and thou shalt be to me as an own son.—I replied, Let it be as thou desirest, O my master. How could I expect to attain unto such happiness ?—The governor then sent immediately a courier to bring the property which my father had left me (for he had died since my departure from him), and now I am living in the utmost affluence.

I wondered, said the Jew, at his history ; and after I had remained with him three days, he gave me a large sum of money ; and I left him, to set forth on a journey ; and, arriving in this your country, my residence here pleased me, and I experienced this which hath happened to me with the humpback.

The King, when he had heard this story, said, This is not more wonderful than the story of the humpback, and ye

must all of you be hanged, and especially the tailor, who is the source of all the mischief. But he afterwards added, O tailor, if thou tell me a story more wonderful than that of the humpback, I will forgive you your offences. So the tailor advanced, and said,—

THE STORY TOLD BY THE TAILOR

Know, O King of the age, that what hath happened to me is more wonderful than the events which have happened to all the others. Before I met the humpback, I was, early in the morning, at an entertainment given to certain tradesmen of my acquaintance, consisting of tailors and linendrapers and carpenters and others ; and when the sun had risen, the repast was brought for us to eat ; and lo, the master of the house came in to us, accompanied by a strange and handsome young man, of the inhabitants of Baghdad. He was attired in clothes of the handsomest description, and was a most comely person, except that he was lame ; and as soon as he had entered and saluted us, we rose to him ; but when he was about to seat himself, he observed among us a man who was a barber, whereupon he refused to sit down, and desired to depart from us. We and the master of the house, however, prevented him, and urged him to seat himself ; and the host conjured him, saying, What is the reason of thy entering, and then immediately departing ?—By Allah, O my master, replied he, offer me no opposition ; for the cause of my departure is this barber, who is sitting with you. And when the host heard this, he was exceedingly surprised, and said, How is it that the heart of this young man, who is from Baghdad, is troubled by the presence of this barber ? We then looked towards him, and said, Relate to us the cause of thy displeasure against this barber ; and the young man replied, O company, a surprising adventure happened to me with this barber in Baghdad, my city ; and he was the cause of my lameness, and of the breaking of my leg ; and I have sworn that I will not sit in any place where he is present, nor dwell in any town where he resides : I

quitted Baghdad and took up my abode in this city, and I will not pass the next night without departing from it.—Upon this, we said to him, We conjure thee, by Allah, to relate to us thy adventure with him.—And the countenance of the barber turned pale when he heard us make this request. The young man then said,—

Know, O good people, that my father was one of the chief merchants of Baghdad; and God (whose name be exalted!) blessed him with no son but myself; and when I grew up, and had attained to manhood, my father was admitted to the mercy of God, leaving me wealth and servants and other dependants; whereupon I began to attire myself in clothes of the handsomest description, and to feed upon the most delicious meats. Now God (whose perfection be extolled!) made me to be a hater of women; and so I continued, until, one day, I was walking through the streets of Baghdad, when a party of them stopped my way: I therefore fled from them, and, entering a by-street which was not a thoroughfare, I reclined upon a mastabah at its further extremity. Here I had been seated but a short time when, lo, a window opposite the place where I sat was opened, and there looked out from it a damsel like the full moon, such as I had never in my life beheld. She had some flowers, which she was watering, beneath the window; and she looked to the right and left, and then shut the window, and disappeared from before me. Fire had been shot into my heart, and my mind was absorbed by her; my hatred of women was turned into love, and I continued sitting in the same place until sunset, in a state of distraction from the violence of my passion, when, lo, the Kadi of the city came riding along, with slaves before him and servants behind him, and alighted, and entered the house from which the damsel had looked out: so I knew that he must be her father.

I then returned to my house, sorrowful; and fell upon my bed, full of anxious thoughts; and my female slaves came in to me, and seated themselves around me, not knowing what was the matter with me; and I acquainted them not with my case, nor returned any answers to their questions; and my disorder increased. The neighbours,

therefore, came to cheer me with their visits ; and among those who visited me was an old woman, who, as soon as she saw me, discovered my state ; whereupon she seated herself at my head, and, addressing me in a kind manner, said, O my son, tell me what hath happened to thee ? So I related to her my story, and she said, O my son, this is the daughter of the Kadi of Baghdad, and she is kept in close confinement : the place where thou sawest her is her apartment, and her father occupies a large saloon below, leaving her alone ; and often do I visit her : thou canst obtain an interview with her only through me : so brace up thy nerves. When I heard, therefore, what she said, I took courage, and fortified my heart ; and my family rejoiced that day. I rose up firm in limb, and hoping for complete restoration ; and the old woman departed ; but she returned with her countenance changed, and said, O my son, ask not what she did when I told her of thy case ; for she said, If thou abstain not, O ill-omened old woman, from this discourse, I will treat thee as thou deservest :—but I must go to her a second time.

On hearing this, my disorder increased : after some days, however, the old woman came again, and said, O my son, I desire of thee a reward for good tidings. My soul returned to my body at these words, and I replied, Thou shalt receive from me everything that thou canst wish. She then said, I went yesterday to the damsel, and when she beheld me with broken heart and weeping eye, she said to me, O my aunt, wherefore do I see thee with contracted heart ?—and when she had thus said, I wept, and answered, O my daughter and mistress, I came to thee yesterday from visiting a youth who loveth thee, and he is at the point of death on thy account :—and, her heart being moved with compassion, she asked, Who is this youth of whom thou speakest ? I answered, He is my son, and the child that is dear to my soul : he saw thee at the window some days ago, while thou wast watering thy flowers ; and when he beheld thy face, he became distracted with love for thee : I informed him of the conversation that I had with thee the first time ; upon which his disorder increased, and he took to his pillow : he is now dying, and there is no doubt of his fate.—And upon this,

her countenance became pale, and she said, Is this all on my account?—Yea, by Allah, I answered; and what dost thou order me to do?—Go to him, said she; convey to him my salutation, and tell him that my love is greater than his; and on Friday next, before the congregational prayers, let him come hither: I will give orders to open the door to him, and to bring him up to me, and I will have a short interview with him, and he shall return before my father comes back from the prayers.

When I heard these words of the old woman, the anguish which I had suffered ceased; my heart was set at rest, and I gave her the suit of clothes which I was then wearing, and she departed, saying to me, Cheer up thy heart. I replied, I have no longer any pain. The people of my house, and my friends, communicated, one to another, the good news of my restoration to health, and I remained thus until the Friday, when the old woman came in to me, and asked me respecting my state: so I informed her that I was happy and well. I then dressed and perfumed myself, and sat waiting for the people to go to prayers, that I might repair to the damsel; but the old woman said to me, Thou hast yet more than ample time, and if thou go to the bath and shave, especially for the sake of obliterating the traces of thy disorder, it will be more becoming.—It is a judicious piece of advice, replied I; but I will shave my head first, and then go into the bath.

So I sent for a barber to shave my head, saying to the boy, Go to the market, and bring me a barber, one who is a man of sense, little inclined to impertinence, that he may not make my head ache by his chattering. And the boy went, and brought this sheykh, who, on entering, saluted me; and when I had returned his salutation, he said to me, May God dispel thy grief and thine anxiety, and misfortunes and sorrows! I responded, May God accept thy prayer! He then said, Be cheerful, O my master; for health hath returned to thee. Dost thou desire to be shaved or to be bled?—for it hath been handed down, on the authority of Ibn-'Abbas,* that the Prophet said, Whoso shorteneth his

* One of the most learned of the companions of his cousin Mohammad, and one of the most celebrated of the relators of his sayings and actions.

hair on Friday, God will avert from him seventy diseases ;—and it hath been handed down also, on the same authority, that the Prophet said, Whoso is cupped on Friday will not be secure from the loss of sight and from frequent disease.—Abstain, said I, from this useless discourse, and come immediately, shave my head, for I am weak. And he arose, and, stretching forth his hand, took out a handkerchief, and opened it ; and lo, there was in it an astrolabe, consisting of seven plates ; and he took it, and went into the middle of the court, where he raised his head towards the sun, and looked for a considerable time ; after which he said to me, Know that there have passed, of this our day,—which is Friday, and which is the tenth of Safar,⁶⁴ of the year 263 of the Flight of the Prophet,—upon whom be the most excellent of blessings and peace !—and the ascendant star of which, according to the required rules of the science of computation, is the planet Mars,—seven degrees and six minutes ; and it happeneth that Mercury hath come in conjunction with that planet ; and this indicateth that the shaving of hair is now a most excellent operation : and it hath indicated to me, also, that thou desirest to confer a benefit upon a person : and fortunate is he !—but after that, there is an announcement that presenteth itself to me respecting a matter which I will not mention to thee.

By Allah, I exclaimed, thou hast wearied me, and dissipated my mind, and augured against me, when I required thee only to shave my head : arise, then, and shave it ; and prolong not thy discourse to me. But he replied, By Allah, if thou knewest the truth of the case, thou wouldest demand of me a further explication ; and I counsel thee to do this day as I direct thee, according to the calculations deduced from the stars : it is thy duty to praise God, and not to oppose me ; for I am one who giveth thee good advice, and who regardeth thee with compassion : I would that I were in thy service for a whole year, that thou mightest do me justice ; and I desire not any pay from thee for so doing.—When I heard this, I said to him, Verily thou art killing me this day, and there is no escape for me.—O my master, he replied, I am he whom the people call Es-Samit, [“the Silent,”] on account of the paucity of my speech, by which I am

distinguished above my brothers : for my eldest brother is named El-Bakbuk ; and the second, El-Heddar ; and the third, Bakbak ; * and the fourth is named El-Kuz el-Aswani ; and the fifth, El-Feshshar ; and the sixth is named Shakalik ; and the seventh brother is named Es-Samit ; and he is myself.

Now when this barber thus overwhelmed me with his talk, I felt as if my gall-bladder had burst, and said to the boy, Give him a quarter of a piece of gold, and let him depart from me for the sake of Allah : for I have no need to shave my head. But the barber on hearing what I said to the boy, exclaimed, What is this that thou hast said, O my lord ? By Allah, I will accept from thee no pay unless I serve thee ; and serve thee I must ; for to do so is incumbent on me, and to perform what thou requirest ; and I care not if I receive from thee no money. If thou knowest not my worth, I know thine ; and thy father—may Allah have mercy upon him !—treated us with beneficence ; for he was a man of generosity. By Allah, thy father sent for me one day, like this blessed day, and when I went to him, he had a number of his friends with him, and he said to me, Take some blood from me. So I took the astrolabe, and observed the altitude for him, and found the ascendant of the hour to be of evil omen, and that the letting of blood would be attended with trouble : I therefore acquainted him with this, and he conformed to my wish, and waited until the arrival of the approved hour, when I took the blood from him. He did not oppose me ; but, on the contrary, thanked me ; and in like manner all the company present thanked me ; and thy father gave me a hundred pieces of gold for services similar to the letting of blood.—May God, said I, shew no mercy to my father for knowing such a man as thou !—and the barber laughed, and exclaimed, There is no deity but God ! Mohammad is God's Apostle ! Extolled be the perfection of Him who changeth others, but is not changed ! I did not imagine thee to be otherwise than a man of sense ; but thou hast talked nonsense in consequence of thine illness. God hath mentioned, in his Excellent Book, those who restrain their anger, and who forgive men :—but thou art

* All three names signify "Chatterer."

excused in every case. I am unacquainted, however, with the cause of thy haste ; and thou knowest that thy father used to do nothing without consulting me ; and it hath been said, that the person to whom one applies for advice should be trusted : now thou wilt find no one better acquainted with the affairs of the world than myself, and I am standing on my feet to serve thee. I am not displeased with thee, and how then art thou displeased with me ? But I will have patience with thee on account of the favours which I have received from thy father.—By Allah, said I, thou hast wearied me with thy discourse, and overcome me with thy speech ! I desire that thou shave my head and depart from me.

I gave vent to my rage ; and would have risen, even if he had wetted my head, when he said, I knew that displeasure with me had overcome thee ; but I will not be angry with thee, for thy sense is weak, and thou art a youth : a short time ago I used to carry thee on my shoulder, and take thee to the school.—Upon this, I said to him, O my brother, I conjure thee by Allah, depart from me that I may perform my business, and go thou thy way. Then I rent my clothes ; and when he saw me do this, he took the razor, and sharpened it, and continued to do so until my soul almost parted from my body ; then advancing to my head, he shaved a small portion of it ; after which he raised his hand, and said, O my lord, haste is from the Devil ;—and he repeated this couplet :—

Deliberate, and haste not to accomplish thy desire ; and be merciful, so shalt thou meet with one merciful :

For there is no hand but God's hand is above it ; nor oppressor that shall not meet with an oppressor.

O my lord (he then continued), I do not imagine that thou knowest my condition in society ; for my hand lighteth upon the heads of kings and emirs and wezirs and sages and learned men ; and of such a one as myself hath the poet said,—

The trades altogether are like a necklace, and this barber is the chief pearl of the strings.

He excelleth all that are endowed with skill, and under his hands are the heads of Kings,

—Leave, said I, that which doth not concern thee! Thou hast contracted my heart, and troubled my mind.—I fancy that thou art in haste, he rejoined. I replied, Yes! Yes! Yes!—Proceed slowly, said he; for verily haste is from the Devil, and it giveth occasion to repentance and disappointment; and he upon whom be blessing and peace hath said, The best of affairs is that which is commenced with deliberation:—and, by Allah, I am in doubt as to thine affair: I wish, therefore, that thou wouldest make known to me what thou art hasting to do; and may it be good; for I fear it is otherwise.

There now remained, to the appointed time, three hours; and he threw the razor from his hand in anger, and, taking the astrolabe, went again to observe the sun; then after he had waited a long time, he returned, saying, There remain, to the hour of prayer, three hours, neither more nor less.—For the sake of Allah, said I, be silent; for thou hast crumbled my liver!—and thereupon, he took the razor, and sharpened it as he had done the first time, and shaved another portion of my head. Then stopping again, he said, I am in anxiety on account of thy hurry: if thou wouldest acquaint me with the cause of it, it would be better for thee; for thou knowest that thy father used to do nothing without consulting me.

I perceived now that I could not avoid his importunity, and said within myself, The time of prayer is almost come, and I desire to go before the people come out from the service: if I delay a little longer, I know not how to gain admission to her. I therefore said to him, Be quick, and cease from this chattering and impertinence; for I desire to repair to an entertainment with my friends. But when he heard the mention of the entertainment, he exclaimed, The day is a blessed day for me! I yesterday conjured a party of my intimate friends to come and feast with me, and forgot to prepare for them anything to eat; and now I have remembered it. Alas for the disgrace that I shall experience from them!—So I said to him, Be in no anxiety on this account, since thou hast been told that I am going to-day to an entertainment; for all the food and drink that is in my house shall be thine if thou use expedition in my

affair, and quickly finish shaving my head.—May God recompense thee with every blessing ! he replied : describe to me what thou hast for my guests, that I may know it.—I have, said I, five dishes of meat, and ten fowls fricandoed, and a roasted lamb.—Cause them to be brought before me, he said, that I may see them. So I had them brought to him, and he exclaimed, Divinely art thou gifted ! How generous is thy soul ! But the incense and perfumes are wanting.—I brought him, therefore, a box containing needd * and aloes-wood and ambergris and musk, worth fifty pieces of gold.—The time had now become contracted, like my own heart ; so I said to him, Receive this, and shave the whole of my head, by the existence of Mohammad, God bless and save him ! But he replied, By Allah, I will not take it until I see all that it contains. I therefore ordered the boy, and he opened the box to him ; whereupon the barber threw down the astrolabe from his hand, and, seating himself upon the ground, turned over the perfumes and incense and aloes-wood in the box until my soul almost quitted my body.

He then advanced, and took the razor, and shaved another small portion of my head ; after which he said, By Allah, O my son, I know not whether I should thank thee or thank thy father ; for my entertainment to-day is entirely derived from thy bounty and kindness, and I have no one among my visitors deserving of it ; for my guests are Zeytun the bath-keeper, and Sali' the wheat-seller, and 'Awkal the bean-seller, and 'Akresheh the grocer, and Homeyd the dustman, and 'Akarish the milk-seller, and each of these hath a peculiar dance which he performeth, and peculiar verses which he reciteth ; and the best of their qualities is, that they are like thy servant, the memluk who is before thee ; and I, thy slave, know neither loquacity nor impertinence. As to the bath-keeper, he saith, If I go not to the feast, it cometh to my house !—and as to the dustman, he is witty, and full of frolic : often doth he dance, and say, News, with my wife, is not kept in a chest !—and each of my friends hath jests that another hath not : but the

* A perfume composed of ambergris, musk, and aloes-wood ; or simply ambergris.

description is not like the actual observation. If thou choose, therefore, to come to us, it will be more pleasant both to thee and to us: relinquish, then, thy visit to thy friends of whom thou hast told us that thou desirest to go to them; for the traces of disease are yet upon thee, and probably thou art going to a people of many words, who will talk of that which concerneth them not; or probably there will be among them one impertinent person; and thy soul is already disquieted by disease.—I replied, If it be the will of God, that shall be on some other day:—but he said, It will be more proper that thou first join my party of friends, that thou mayest enjoy their conviviality, and delight thyself with their salt. Act in accordance with the saying of the poet:—

Defer not a pleasure when it can be had; for fortune often destroyeth our plans.

Upon this I laughed from a heart laden with anger, and said to him, Do what I require, that I may go in the care of God, whose name be exalted! and do thou go to thy friends, for they are waiting thine arrival. He replied, I desire nothing but to introduce thee into the society of these people; for verily they are of the sons of that class among which is no impertinent person; and if thou didst but behold them once, thou wouldest leave all thine own companions.—May God, said I, give thee abundant joy with them, and I must bring them together here some day.—If that be thy wish, he rejoined, and thou wilt first attend the entertainment of thy friends this day, wait until I take this present with which thou hast honoured me, and place it before my friends, that they may eat and drink without waiting for me, and then I will return to thee, and go with thee to thy companions; for there is no false delicacy between me and my companions that should prevent my leaving them: so I will return to thee quickly, and repair with thee whithersoever thou goest.—Upon this I exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great! Go thou to thy companions, and delight thy heart with them, and leave me to repair to mine, and to remain with them this day, for they are waiting my arrival.—But he said, I

will not leave thee to go alone.—The place to which I am going, said I, none can enter except myself.—I suppose then, he rejoined, that thou hast an appointment to-day with some female: otherwise, thou wouldest take me with thee; for I am more deserving than all other men, and will assist thee to attain what thou desirest. I fear that thou art going to visit some strange woman, and that thy life will be lost; for in this city of Baghdad no one can do anything of this kind, especially on such a day as this; seeing that the Wali of Baghdad is a terrible, sharp sword.—Wo to thee, O wicked old man! I exclaimed, what are these words with which thou addressest me?—And upon this, he kept a long silence.

The time of prayer had now arrived, and the time of the Khutbeh* was near, when he had finished shaving my head: so I said to him, Go with this food and drink to thy friends, and I will wait for thee until thou return, and thou shalt accompany me:—and I continued my endeavours to deceive him, that he might go away; but he said to me, Verily thou art deceiving me, and wilt go alone, and precipitate thyself into a calamity from which there will be no escape for thee: by Allah! by Allah! then, quit not this spot until I return to thee and accompany thee, that I may know what will be the result of thine affair.—I replied, Well: prolong not thine absence from me. And he took the food and drink and other things which I had given him, but intrusted them to a porter to convey them to his abode, and concealed himself in one of the by-streets. I then immediately arose. The muezzins on the menarehs had chanted the Selam of Friday; and I put on my clothes, and went forth alone, and, arriving at the by-street, stopped at the door of the house where I had seen the damsels: and lo, the barber was behind me, and I knew it not. I found the door open, and entered; and immediately the master of the house returned from the prayers, and entered the saloon, and closed the door; and I said within myself, How did this devil discover me?

Now it happened, just at this time, for the fulfilment of God's purpose to rend the veil of protection before me, that a female slave belonging to the master of the house

* Friday sermon.

committed some offence, in consequence of which he beat her, and she cried out ; whereupon a male slave came in to him to liberate her ; but he beat him also, and he likewise cried out ; and the barber concluded that he was beating me ; so he cried, and rent his clothes, and sprinkled dust upon his head, shrieking, and calling for assistance. He was surrounded by people, and said to them, My master hath been killed in the house of the Kadi ! Then running to my house, crying out all the while, and with a crowd behind him, he gave the news to my family ; and I knew not what he had done when they approached, crying, Alas for our master !—the barber all the while being before them, with his clothes rent, and a number of the people of the city with them. They continued shrieking, the barber shrieking at their head, and all of them exclaiming, Alas for our slain !—Thus they advanced to the house in which I was confined ; and when the Kadi heard of this occurrence, the event troubled him, and he arose, and opened the door, and seeing a great crowd, he was confounded, and said, O people, what is the news ? The servants replied, Thou hast killed our master. —O people, rejoined he, what hath your master done unto me that I should kill him ; and wherefore do I see this barber before you ?—Thou hast just now beaten him with mikra'ahs, said the barber ; and I heard his cries.—What hath he done that I should kill him ? repeated the Kadi. And whence, he added, came he ; and whither would he go ?—Be not an old man of malevolence, exclaimed the barber ; for I know the story, and the reason of his entering thy house, and the truth of the whole affair : thy daughter is in love with him, and he is in love with her ; and thou hast discovered that he had entered thy house, and hast ordered thy young men, and they have beaten him. By Allah, none shall decide between us and thee except the Khalifeh ; or thou shalt bring forth to us our master that his family may take him ; and oblige me not to enter and take him forth from you : haste then thyself to produce him.

Upon this, the Kadi was withheld from speaking, and became utterly abashed before the people : but presently he said to the barber, If thou speak truth, enter thyself, and bring him forth. So the barber advanced, and entered the

house; and when I saw him do so, I sought for a way to escape; but I found no place of refuge except a large chest which I observed in the same apartment in which I then was: I therefore entered this, and shut down the lid, and held in my breath. Immediately after, the barber ran into the saloon, and, without looking in any other direction than that in which I had concealed myself, came thither: then turning his eyes to the right and left, and seeing nothing but the chest, he raised it upon his head; whereupon my reason forsook me. He quickly descended with it; and I, being now certain that he would not quit me, opened the chest, and threw myself upon the ground. My leg was broken by the fall; and when I came to the door of the house, I found a multitude of people: I had never seen such a crowd as was there collected on that day; so I began to scatter gold among them, to divert them; and while they were busied in picking it up, I hastened through the by-streets of Baghdad, followed by this barber; and wherever I entered, he entered after me, crying, They would have plunged me into affliction on account of my master! Praise be to God who aided me against them, and delivered my master from their hands! Thou continuedst, O my master, to be excited by haste for the accomplishment of thine evil design until thou broughtest upon thyself this event; and if God had not blessed thee with me, thou hadst not escaped from this calamity into which thou hast fallen; and they might have involved thee in a calamity from which thou wouldest never have escaped. Beg, therefore, of God, that I may live for thy sake, to liberate thee in future. By Allah, thou hast almost destroyed me by thine evil design, desiring to go alone: but we will not be angry with thee for thine ignorance, for thou art endowed with little sense, and of a hasty disposition.—Art thou not satisfied, replied I, with that which thou hast done, but wilt thou run after me through the market-streets?—And I desired for death to liberate me from him; but found it not; and in the excess of my rage I ran from him, and, entering a shop in the midst of the market, implored the protection of its owner; and he drove away the barber from me.

I then seated myself in a magazine belonging to him, and said within myself, I cannot now rid myself of this barber ; but he will be with me night and day, and I cannot endure the sight of his face. So I immediately summoned witnesses, and wrote a document, dividing my property among my family, and appointing a guardian over them, and I ordered him to sell the house and all the immoveable possessions, charging him with the care of the old and young, and set forth at once on a journey in order to escape from this wretch. I then arrived in your country, where I took up my abode, and have remained a considerable time ; and when ye invited me, and I came unto you, I saw this vile wretch among you, seated at the upper end of the room. How, then, can my heart be at ease, or my sitting in your company be pleasant to me, with this fellow, who hath brought these events upon me, and been the cause of the breaking of my leg ?

The young man still persevered in his refusal to remain with us ; and when we had heard his story, we said to the barber, Is this true which the young man hath said of thee ? —By Allah, he answered, it was through my intelligence that I acted thus towards him ; and had I not done so, he had perished : myself only was the cause of his escape ; and it was through the goodness of God, by my means, that he was afflicted by the breaking of his leg instead of being punished by the loss of his life. Were I a person of many words, I had not done him this kindness ; and now I will relate to you an event that happened to me, that ye may believe me to be a man of few words, and less of an impertinent than my brothers ; and it was this :—

THE BARBER'S STORY OF HIMSELF

I was living in Baghdad, in the reign of the Prince of the Faithful El-Muntasir bi-llah,^{**} who loved the poor and indigent, and associated with the learned and virtuous ; and it happened, one day, that he was incensed against ten

* Great-grandson of Harun Er-Rashid ; acceded 861 A.D.

persons, in consequence of which, he ordered the chief magistrate of Baghdad to bring them to him in a boat. I saw them, and I said within myself, These persons have assembled for nothing but an entertainment, and, I suppose, will pass their day in this boat eating and drinking ; and none shall be their companion but myself :—so I embarked, and mixed myself among them ; and when they had landed on the opposite bank, the guards of the Wali came with chains, and put them upon their necks, and put a chain upon my neck also.—Now this, O people, is it not a proof of my generosity, and of my paucity of speech ? For I determined not to speak.—They took us, therefore, all together, in chains, and placed us before El-Muntasir bil-lah, the Prince of the Faithful ; whereupon he gave orders to strike off the heads of the ten ; and the executioner struck off the heads of the ten, and I remained. The Khalifeh then turning his eyes, and beholding me, said to the executioner, Wherefore dost thou not strike off the heads of all the ten ? He answered, I have beheaded every one of the ten.—I do not think, rejoined the Khalifeh, that thou hast beheaded more than nine ; and this who is before me is the tenth. But the executioner replied, By thy beneficence, they are ten.—Count them, said the Khalifeh. And they counted them ; and lo, they were ten. The Khalifeh then looked towards me, and said, What hath induced thee to be silent on this occasion ; and how hast thou become included among the men of blood ?—And when I heard the address of the Prince of the Faithful, I said to him, Know, O Prince of the Faithful, that I am the sheykh Es-Samit (the Silent) : I possess, of science, a large stock ; and as to the gravity of my understanding, and the quickness of my apprehension, and the paucity of my speech, they are unbounded : my trade is that of a barber ; and yesterday, early in the morning, I saw these ten men proceeding to the boat ; whereupon I mixed myself with them, and embarked with them, thinking that they had met together for an entertainment ; but soon it appeared that they were criminals ; and the guards came to them, and put chains upon their necks, and upon my neck also they put a chain ; and from the excess of my generosity I was

silent, and spoke not: my speech was not heard on that occasion, on account of the excess of my generosity; and they proceeded with us until they stationed us before thee, and thou gavest the order to strike off the heads of the ten, and I remained before the executioner, and acquainted you not with my case. Was not this great generosity which compelled me to accompany them to slaughter? But throughout my life I have acted in this excellent manner.

When the Khalifeh heard my words, and knew that I was of a very generous character, and of few words, and not inclined to impertinence as this young man, whom I delivered from horrors, asserteth, he said, Hast thou brothers? I answered, Yes: six.—And are thy six brothers, said he, like thyself, distinguished by science and knowledge, and paucity of speech? I answered, They lived not so as to be like me: thou hast disparaged me by thy supposition, O Prince of the Faithful, and it is not proper that thou shouldst compare my brothers to me; for through the abundance of their speech, and the smallness of their generous qualities, each of them experienced a defect: the first was lame; the second, deprived of many of his teeth; the third, blind; the fourth, one-eyed; the fifth, cropped of his ears; and the sixth had both his lips cut off:⁶⁶ and think not, O Prince of the Faithful, that I am a man of many words: nay, I must prove to thee that I am of a more generous character than they; and each of them met with a particular adventure, in consequence of which he experienced a defect: if thou please, I will relate their stories to thee.

THE BARBER'S STORY OF HIS FIRST BROTHER

Know, O Prince of the Faithful, that the first (who was named El-Bakbuk) was the lame one. He practised the art of a tailor in Baghdad, and used to sew in a shop which he hired of a man possessing great wealth, who lived over the shop, and who had, in the lower part of his house, a mill. And as my lame brother was sitting in his shop one

day, sewing, he raised his head, and saw a woman like the rising full moon, at a projecting window of the house, looking at the people passing by ; and as soon as he beheld her, his heart was entangled by her love. He passed that day gazing at her, and neglecting his occupation, until the evening ; and on the following morning he opened his shop, and sat down to sew ; but every time that he sewed a stitch, he looked towards the window ; and in this state he continued, sewing nothing sufficient to earn a piece of silver.

On⁶⁷ the third day he seated himself again in his place, looking towards the woman ; and she saw him, and, perceiving that he had become enslaved by her love, laughed in his face, and he, in like manner, laughed in her face. She then disappeared from before him, and sent to him her slave-girl, with a wrapper containing a piece of red flowered silk ; and the girl, coming to him, said to him, My mistress saluteth thee, and desireth thee to cut out for her, with the hand of skill, a shirt of this piece, and to sew it beautifully. So he answered, I hear and obey :—and he cut out for her the shirt, and finished the sewing of it on that day ; and on the following day the slave-girl came to him again, and said to him, My mistress saluteth thee, and saith to thee, How didst thou pass last night ?—for she tasted not sleep, from her passion for thee.—She then placed before him a piece of yellow satin, and said to him, My mistress desireth thee to cut out for her, of this piece, two pairs of trousers, and to make them this day. He replied, I hear and obey. Salute her with abundant salutations, and say to her, Thy slave is submissive to thine order, and command him to do whatsoever thou wilt.—He then busied himself with the cutting out, and used all diligence in sewing the two pairs of trousers ; and presently the woman looked out at him from the window, and saluted him by a sign, now casting down her eyes, and now smiling in his face, so that he imagined he should soon obtain possession of her. After this, she disappeared from before him, and the slave-girl came to him ; so he delivered to her the two pairs of trousers, and she took them and departed : and when the night came, he threw himself upon his bed, and remained turning himself over in restlessness until the morning.

On the following day, the master of the house came to my brother, bringing some linen, and said to him, Cut out and make this into shirts for me. He replied, I hear and obey:—and ceased not from his work until he had cut out twenty shirts by the time of nightfall, without having tasted food. The man then said to him, How much is thy hire for this?—but my brother answered not; and the damsels made a sign to him that he should receive nothing, though he was absolutely in want of a single copper coin. For three days he continued scarcely eating or drinking anything, in his diligence to accomplish his work, and when he had finished it, he went to deliver the shirts.

Now the young woman had acquainted her husband with the state of my brother's mind, but my brother knew not this; and she planned with her husband to employ him in sewing without remuneration, and moreover to amuse themselves by laughing at him: so, when he had finished all the work that they gave him, they contrived a plot against him, and married him to their slave-girl; and on the night when he desired to introduce himself to her, they said to him, Pass this night in the mill, and to-morrow thou shalt enjoy happiness. My brother, therefore, thinking that their intention was good, passed the night in the mill alone. Meanwhile, the husband of the young woman went to the miller, and instigated him by signs to make my brother turn the mill. The miller, accordingly, went in to him at midnight, and began to exclaim, Verily this bull is lazy, while there is a great quantity of wheat, and the owners of the flour are demanding it: I will therefore yoke him in the mill, that he may finish the grinding of the flour:—and so saying, he yoked my brother, and thus he kept him until near morning, when the owner of the house came, and saw him yoked in the mill, and the miller flogging him with the whip; and he left him, and retired. After this, the slave-girl to whom he had been contracted in marriage came to him early in the morning, and, having unbound him from the mill, said to him, Both I and my mistress have been distressed by this which hath befallen thee, and we have participated in the burden of thy sorrow. But he had no tongue wherewith to answer her, by reason of the severity of the flogging. He

then returned to his house ; and lo, the sheykh who had performed the marriage-contract came and saluted him, saying, May God prolong thy life ! May thy marriage be blessed !—May God not preserve the liar ! returned my brother : thou thousandfold villain ! By Allah, I went only to turn the mill in the place of the bull until the morning.—Tell me thy story, said the sheykh :—and my brother told him what had happened to him : upon which the sheykh said, Thy star agreeth not with hers : but if thou desire that I should change for thee the mode of the contract, I will change it for another better than it, that thy star may agree with hers.—See then, replied my brother, if thou hast any other contrivance to employ.

My brother then left him, and repaired again to his shop, hoping that somebody might give him some work, with the profit of which he might obtain his food ; and lo, the slave-girl came to him. She had conspired with her mistress to play him this trick, and said to him, Verily, my mistress is longing for thee, and she hath gone up to look at thy face from the window. And my brother had scarcely heard these words when she looked out at him from the window, and, weeping, said, Wherefore hast thou cut short the intercourse between us and thee ? But he returned her no answer : so she swore to him that all that had happened to him in the mill was not with her consent ; and when my brother beheld her beauty and loveliness, the troubles that had befallen him became effaced from his memory, and he accepted her excuse, and rejoiced at the sight of her. He saluted her, therefore, and conversed with her, and then sat a while at his work ; after which the slave-girl came to him, and said, My mistress saluteth thee, and informeth thee that her husband hath determined to pass this next night in the house of one of his intimate friends ; wherefore, when he hath gone thither, do thou come to her.—Now the husband of the young woman had said to her, How shall we contrive when he cometh to thee that I may take him and drag him before the Wali ? She replied, Let me then play him a trick, and involve him in a disgrace for which he shall be paraded throughout this city as an example to others :—and my brother knew nothing of the craftiness of women. Accordingly,

at the approach of evening, the slave-girl came to him, and, taking him by the hand, returned with him to her mistress, who said to him, Verily, O my master, I have been longing for thee.—Hasten then, said he, to give me a kiss, first of all. And his words were not finished when the young woman's husband came in from his neighbour's house, and, seizing my brother, exclaimed to him, By Allah, I will not loose thee but in the presence of the chief magistrate of the police. My brother humbled himself before him; but, without listening to him, he took him to the house of the Wali, who flogged him with whips, and mounted him upon a camel, and conveyed him through the streets of the city, the people crying out, This is the recompense of him who breaketh into the harims of others!—and he fell from the camel, and his leg broke: so he became lame. The Wali then banished him from the city; and he went forth, not knowing whither to turn his steps: but I, though enraged, overtook him, and brought him back; and I have taken upon myself to provide him with meat and drink unto the present day.

The Khalifeh laughed at my story, and exclaimed, Thou hast spoken well:—but I replied, I will not accept this honour until thou hast listened to me while I relate to thee what happened to the rest of my brothers; and think me not a man of many words.—Tell me, said the Khalifeh, what happened to all thy brothers, and grace my ears with these nice particulars: I beg thee to employ exuberance of diction in thy relation of these pleasant tales.

THE BARBER'S STORY OF HIS SECOND BROTHER

So I said, Know, O Prince of the Faithful, that my second brother, whose name was El-Heddar,⁶⁵ was going one day to transact some business, when an old woman met him, and said to him, O man, stop a little, that I may propose to thee a thing, which, if it please thee, thou shalt do for me. My brother, therefore, stopped; and she said to him, I will

guide thee to a thing, and rightly direct thee to it, on the condition that thy words be not many. So he said, Communicate what thou hast to tell me :—and she proceeded thus :—What sayest thou of a handsome house, with running water, and fruit and wine, and a beautiful face to behold, and a smooth cheek to kiss, and an elegant form to embrace ; and to enjoy all these pleasures without interruption ? Now, if thou wilt act agreeably with the condition that I have imposed upon thee, thou wilt see prosperity.—When my brother had heard her words, he said to her, O my mistress, how is it that thou hast sought me out in preference to all the rest of the creation for this affair ; and what is there in me that hath pleased thee ? She replied, Did I not say to thee that thou must not be a person of many words ? Be silent then, and come with me.

The old woman then went her way, my brother following her, eager to enjoy the pleasures which she had described to him, until they had entered a spacious house, when she went up with him to an upper story, and my brother perceived that he was in a beautiful palace, in which he beheld four damsels, than whom none more lovely had ever been seen, singing with voices that would charm a heart as insensible as stone. One of these damsels drank a cup of wine ; and my brother said to her, May it be attended with health and vigour !—and advanced to wait upon her ; but she prevented his doing so, giving him to drink a cup of wine ; and as soon as he had drunk it, she slapped him on his neck. When he found that she treated him thus, he went out from the chamber in anger, and with many words ; but the old woman, following him, made a sign to him with her eye that he should return : so he returned, and seated himself, without speaking ; and upon this, the damsel slapped him again upon the back of his neck until he became senseless ; after which, recovering, he withdrew again. The old woman, however, overtook him, and said to him, Wait a little, and thou shalt attain thy wish.—How many times, said he, shall I wait a little before I attain it ? The old woman answered, When she hath become exhilarated with wine thou shalt obtain her favour. He therefore returned to his place, and resumed his seat. All the four damsels

then arose, and the old woman directed them to divest my brother of his outer clothes, and to sprinkle some rose-water upon his face ; and when they had done so, the most beautiful one among them said to him, May Allah exalt thee to honour ! Thou hast entered my abode, and if thou have patience to submit to my requisitions, thou wilt attain thy wish.—O my mistress, he replied, I am thy slave, and under thy authority.—Know then, said she, that I am devotedly fond of frolic, and he who complieth with my demands will obtain my favour. Then she ordered the other damsels to sing ; and they sang so that their hearers were in an ecstasy ; after which the chief lady said to one of the other damsels, Take thy master, and do what is required, and bring him back to me immediately.

Accordingly, she took him away, ignorant of that which she was about to do ; and the old woman came to him, and said, Be patient ; for there remaineth but little to do. He then turned towards the damsels, and the old woman said to him, Be patient : thou hast almost succeeded, and there remaineth but one thing, which is, to shave thy beard.—How, said he, shall I do that which will disgrace me among the people ? The old woman answered, She desireth this only to make thee like a beardless youth, that there may be nothing on thy face to prick her ; for her heart is affected with a violent love for thee. Be patient, therefore, and thou shalt attain thy desire.—So my brother patiently submitted to the damsels' directions : his beard was shaven, and he was shorn also of his eyebrows and mustaches, and his face was painted red, before the damsels took him back to the chief lady, who, when she saw him, was at first frightened at him, and then laughed until she fell backwards, and exclaimed, O my master, thou hast gained me by these proofs of thine amiable manners ! She then conjured him by her life to arise and dance ; and he did so ; and there was not a single cushion in the chamber that she did not throw at him. In like manner also the other damsels threw at him various things, such as oranges, and limes, and citrons, until he fell down senseless from the pelting, while they slapped him incessantly upon the back of his neck, and cast things in his face. But at length the old woman said

to him, Now thou hast attained thy wish. Know that there remaineth to thee no more beating, nor doth there remain for thee to do more than one thing, namely, this: it is her custom, when she is under the influence of wine, to suffer no one to come near her until she hath taken off her outer clothes: thou, being prepared in the like manner, must run after her, and she will run before thee as though she were flying from thee; but cease not to follow her from place to place until thou overtake her. He arose, therefore, and did so: the lady ran before, and as he followed her, she passed from chamber to chamber, and he still ran after her. At last he heard her utter a slight sound as she ran before him, and, continuing his pursuit, he suddenly found himself in the midst of the street.

This street was in the market of the leather-sellers, who were then crying skins for sale; and when the people there collected saw him in this condition, almost naked, with shaven beard and eyebrows and mustaches, and with his face painted red, they shouted at him, and raised a loud laugh, and some of them beat him with the skins until he became insensible. They then placed him upon an ass, and conducted him to the Wali, who exclaimed, What is this?—They answered, This descended upon us from the house of the Wezir, in this condition. And the Wali inflicted upon him a hundred lashes, and banished him from the city: but I went out after him, and brought him back privately into the city, and allotted him a maintenance. Had it not been for my generous disposition, I had not borne with such a person.

THE BARBER'S STORY OF HIS THIRD BROTHER

As to my third brother (the blind man, Bakbak), who was also surnamed Kuffeh, fate and destiny impelled him one day to a large house, and he knocked at the door, hoping that its master would answer him, and that he might beg of him a trifle. The owner called out, Who is at the

door?—but my brother answered not; and then heard him call with a loud voice, Who is this? Still, however, he returned him no answer; and he heard the sounds of his footsteps approaching until he came to the door and opened it, when he said to him, What dost thou desire? My brother answered, Something for the sake of God, whose name be exalted!—Art thou blind? said the man; and my brother answered, Yes.—Then give me thy hand, rejoined the master of the house;—so my brother stretched forth to him his hand, and the man took him into the house, and led him up from stair-case to stair-case until he had ascended to the highest platform of the roof: my brother thinking that he was going to give him some food or money: and when he had arrived at this highest terrace of his house, the owner said, What dost thou desire, O blind man?—I desire something, he answered again, for the sake of God, whose name be exalted!—May God, replied the man, open to thee some other way!—What is this! exclaimed my brother: couldst thou not tell me so when I was below?—Thou vilest of the vile! retorted the other: why didst thou not ask of me something for the sake of God when thou hearest my voice the first time, when thou wast knocking at the door?—What then, said my brother, dost thou mean to do to me?—The man of the house answered, I have nothing to give thee.—Then take me down the stairs, said my brother. The man replied, The way is before thee. So my brother made his way to the stairs, and continued descending until there remained, between him and the door, twenty steps, when his foot slipped and he fell, and, rolling down, broke his head.

He went forth, not knowing whither to direct his steps, and presently there met him two blind men, his companions, who said to him, What hath happened to thee this day? My brother, therefore, related to them the event that had just befallen him; and then said to them, O my brothers, I desire to take a portion of the money now in our possession, to expend it upon myself.—Now the owner of the house which he had just before entered had followed him to acquaint himself with his proceedings, and without my brother's knowledge he walked behind him until the latter

entered his abode ; when he went in after him, still unknown. My brother then sat waiting for his companions ; and when they came in to him, he said to them, Shut the door, and search the room, lest any stranger have followed us. When the intruder, therefore, heard what he said, he arose, and clung to a rope that was attached to the ceiling ; and the blind men went feeling about the whole of the chamber, and, finding no one, returned and seated themselves by my brother, and brought forth their money, and counted it ; and lo, it was more than ten thousand pieces of silver. Having done this, they laid it in a corner of the room, and each of them took of the surplus of that sum as much as he wanted, and they buried the ten thousand pieces of silver in the earth ; after which, they placed before themselves some food, and sat eating ; but my brother heard the sound of a stranger by his side, and said to his friends, Is there a stranger among us ? Then stretching forth his hand, it grasped the hand of the intruder ; whereupon he cried out to his companions, saying, Here is a stranger !—and they fell upon him with blows until they were tired, when they shouted out, O Muslims ! a thief hath come in upon us, and desireth to take our property !—and immediately a number of persons collected around them.

Upon this, the stranger whom they accused of being a thief shut his eyes, feigning to be blind like themselves, so that no one who saw him doubted him to be so ; and shouted, O Muslims ! I demand protection of Allah and the Sultan ! I demand protection of Allah and the Wali ! I demand protection of Allah and the Emir ! for I have important information to give to the Emir !—and before they could collect their thoughts, the officers of the Wali surrounded them and took them all, including my brother, and conducted them before their master. The Wali said, What is your story ?—and the stranger replied, Hear my words, O Wali ; the truth of our case will not become known to thee but by means of beating ; and if thou wilt, begin by beating me before my companions. The Wali therefore said, Throw down this man, and flog him with whips :—and accordingly they threw him down and flogged him ; and when the stripes tortured him, he opened one of

his eyes ; and after they had continued the flogging a little longer, he opened his other eye; upon which the Wali exclaimed, What meaneth this conduct, O thou villain ?—Grant me indemnity, replied the man, and I will acquaint thee :—and the Wali having granted his request, he said, We four pretend that we are blind, and, intruding among other people, enter their houses, and see their women, and employ stratagems to corrupt them, and to obtain money from them. We have acquired, by these means, vast gain, amounting to ten thousand pieces of silver ; and I said to my companions, Give me my due, two thousand and five hundred ; and they rose against me and beat me, and took my property. I beg protection, therefore, of Allah and of thee ; and thou art more deserving of my share than they. If thou desire to know the truth of that which I have said, flog each of them more than thou hast flogged me, and he will open his eyes.

So the Wali immediately gave orders to flog them ; and the first of them who suffered was my brother. They continued beating him until he almost died ; when the Wali said to them, O ye scoundrels ! do ye deny the gracious gift of God, feigning yourselves to be blind ? My brother exclaimed, Allah ! Allah ! Allah ! there is none among us who seeth !—They then threw him down again, and ceased not to beat him until he became insensible, when the Wali said, Leave him until he shall have recovered, and then give him a third flogging :—and in the meantime, he gave orders to flog his companions, to give each of them more than three hundred stripes ; while the seeing man said to them, Open your eyes, or they will flog you again after this time. Then addressing himself to the Wali, he said, Send with me some person to bring thee the property ; for these men will not open their eyes, fearing to be disgraced before the spectators. And the Wali sent with him a man, who brought him the money ; and he took it, and gave to the informer, out of it, two thousand and five hundred pieces of silver, according to the share which he claimed, in spite of the others (retaining the rest), and banished from the city my brother and the two other men ; but I went forth, O Prince of the Faithful, and, having overtaken my brother, asked him respecting his sufferings ; and he acquainted me

with that which I have related unto thee. I then brought him back secretly into the city, and allotted him a supply of food and drink as long as he lived.

The Khalifeh laughed at my story, and said, Give him a present, and let him go:—but I replied, I will receive nothing until I have declared to the Prince of the Faithful what happened to the rest of my brothers, and made it manifest to him that I am a man of few words:—whereupon the Khalifeh said, Crack our ears, then, with thy ridiculous stories, and continue to us thy disclosure of vices and misdeeds. So I proceeded thus:—

THE BARBER'S STORY OF HIS FOURTH BROTHER

My fourth brother, O Prince of the Faithful, was the one-eyed (named El-Kuz el Aswani): he was a butcher in Baghdad, and both sold meat and reared lambs; and the great and the rich had recourse to him to purchase of him their meat, so that he amassed great wealth, and became possessor of cattle and houses. Thus he continued to prosper for a long time; and as he was in his shop, one day, there accosted him an old man with a long beard, who handed to him some money, saying, Give me some meat for it. So he took the money, and gave him the meat; and when the old man had gone away, my brother looked at the money which he had payed him, and, seeing that it was of a brilliant whiteness, put it aside by itself. This old man continued to repair to him during a period of five months, and my brother always threw his money into a chest by itself; after which period he desired to take it out for the purpose of buying some sheep; but on opening the chest, he found all the contents converted into white paper, clipped round; and he slapped his face, and cried out; whereupon a number of people collected around him, and he related to them his story, at which they were astonished.

He then went again, as usual, into his shop, and, having killed a ram, and hung it up within the shop, he cut off

some of the meat, and suspended it outside, saying within himself, Perhaps now this old man will come again, and if so, I will seize him:—and very soon after, the old man approached with his money; upon which my brother arose, and, laying hold upon him, began to cry out, O Muslims, come to my aid, and hear what this scoundrel hath done unto me! But when the old man heard his words, he said to him, Which will be more agreeable to thee—that thou abstain from disgracing me, or that I disgrace thee, before the people?—For what wilt thou disgrace me? said my brother. The old man answered, For thy selling human flesh for mutton.—Thou liest, thou accursed! exclaimed my brother.—None is accursed, rejoined the old man, but he who hath a man suspended in his shop. My brother said, If it be as thou hast asserted, my property and blood shall be lawful to thee:—and immediately the old man exclaimed, O ye people here assembled! verily this butcher slaughtereth human beings, and selleth their flesh for mutton; and if ye desire to know the truth of my assertion, enter his shop! So the people rushed upon his shop, and beheld the ram converted into a man, hung up; and they laid hold upon my brother, crying out against him, Thou infidel! Thou scoundrel!—and those who had been his dearest friends turned upon him and beat him; and the old man gave him a blow upon his eye, and knocked it out. The people then carried the carcass, and took with them my brother, to the chief magistrate of the police; and the old man said to him, O Emir, this man slaughtereth human beings, and selleth their flesh for mutton; and we have therefore brought him to thee: arise, then, and perform the requisition of God, whose might and glory be extolled! Upon this, the magistrate thrust back my brother from him, and, refusing to listen to what he would have said, ordered that five hundred blows of a staff should be inflicted upon him, and took all his property. Had it not been for the great amount of his wealth, he had put him to death. He then banished him from the city.

My brother, therefore, went forth in a state of distraction, not knowing what course to pursue; but he journeyed onwards until he arrived at a great city, where he thought

fit to settle as a shoemaker: so he opened a shop, and sat there working for his subsistence. And one day he went forth on some business, and, hearing the neighing of horses, he inquired respecting the cause, and was told that the King was going forth to hunt; whereupon he went to amuse himself with the sight of the procession: but the King happening to look on one side, his eye met that of my brother, and immediately he hung down his head, and exclaimed, I seek refuge with God from the evil of this day! He then turned aside the bridle of his horse, and rode back, and all his troops returned with him; after which, he ordered his pages to run after my brother, and to beat him; and they did so; giving him so severe a beating that he almost died; and he knew not the cause. He returned to his abode in a miserable plight, and afterwards went and related his misfortune to one of the King's attendants, who laughed at the recital until he fell backwards, and said to him, O my brother, the King cannot endure the sight of a one-eyed person, and especially when the defect is that of the left eye; for in this case, he faileth not to put the person to death.

When my brother heard these words, he determined to fly from that city; and forthwith departed from it, and repaired to another city, where there was no King. Here he remained a long time; and after this, as he was meditating upon his adventure in the former city, he went out one day to amuse himself, and heard again the neighing of horses behind him; upon which he exclaimed, The decree of God hath come to pass!—and ran away, seeking for a place in which to conceal himself; but he found none, until, continuing his search, he saw a door set up as a barricade: so he pushed this, and it fell down; and, entering the doorway, he beheld a long passage, into which he advanced. Suddenly, however, two men laid hold upon him, and exclaimed, Praise be to God who hath enabled us to take thee, O thou enemy of God! For these three nights thou hast suffered us to enjoy neither quiet nor sleep, and we have found no repose: nay, thou hast given us a foretaste of death!—O men, said my brother, what hath happened unto you? They answered, Thou keepest a watch upon us, and desirest to disgrace us, and to disgrace the master of the

house ! Is it not enough for thee that thou hast reduced him to poverty, thou and thy companions ? Produce now the knife wherewith thou threatenest us every night.—And so saying, they searched him, and found upon his waist the knife with which he cut the shoe-leather.—O men, he exclaimed, fear God in your treatment of me, and know that my story is wonderful. They said, What then is thy story ? So he related it to them, in the hope that they would liberate him : but they believed not what he said ; and, instead of shewing him any regard, they beat him, and tore his clothes ; whereupon, his body becoming exposed to their view, they discovered upon his sides the marks of beating with mikra'ahs, and exclaimed, O wretch ! these scars bear testimony to thy guilt. They then conducted him before the Wali, while he said within himself, I am undone for my transgressions, and none can deliver me but God, whose name be exalted ! And when he was brought before the Wali, the magistrate said to him, O thou scoundrel ! nothing but a heinous crime hath occasioned thy having been beaten with mikra'ahs :—and he caused a hundred lashes to be inflicted upon him ; after which, they mounted him upon a camel, and proclaimed before him, This is the recompense of him who breaketh into men's houses !—But I had already heard of his misfortunes, and gone forth, and found him ; and I accompanied him about the city while they were making this proclamation, until they left him ; when I took him, and brought him back secretly into Baghdad, and apportioned him a daily allowance of food and drink.

THE BARBER'S FIFTH BROTHER

My fifth brother (El-Feshshar ["Alnaschar"])⁶⁰ was cropped of his ears, O Prince of the Faithful. He was a pauper, who begged alms by night, and subsisted upon what he thus acquired by day : and our father was a very old man, and he fell sick and died, leaving to us seven hundred pieces of silver, of which each of us took his portion ; namely, a hundred pieces. Now my fifth brother, when he had received his

share, was perplexed, not knowing what to do with it; but while he was in this state, it occurred to his mind to buy with it all kinds of articles of glass, and to sell them and make profit: so he bought glass with his hundred pieces of silver, and put it in a large tray, and sat upon an elevated place, to sell it, leaning his back against a wall. And as he sat, he meditated, and said within himself, Verily my whole stock consisteth of this glass: I will sell it for two hundred pieces of silver; and with the two hundred I will buy other glass, which I will sell for four hundred; and thus I will continue buying and selling until I have acquired great wealth. Then with this I will purchase all kinds of merchandise and essences and jewels, and so obtain vast gain. After that, I will buy a handsome house, and memluks, and horses, and gilded saddles; and I will eat and drink; and I will not leave in the city a single female singer but I will have her brought to my house that I may hear her songs.—All this he calculated with the tray of glass lying before him.—Then, said he, I will send all the female betrothers to seek in marriage for me the daughters of Kings and Wezirs; and I will demand as my wife the daughter of the chief Wezir; for I have heard that she is endowed with perfect beauty and surprising loveliness; and I will give as her dowry a thousand pieces of gold. If her father consent, my wish is attained; and if he consent not, I will take her by force, in spite of him: and when I have come back to my house, I will buy ten young eunuchs, and I will purchase the apparel of Kings and Sultans, and cause to be made for me a saddle of gold set with jewels; after which I will ride every day upon a horse, with slaves behind me and before me, and go about through the streets and markets to amuse myself, while the people will salute me and pray for me. Then I will pay a visit to the Wezir, who is the father of the maiden, with memluks behind me and before me, and on my right hand and on my left; and when he seeth me, he will rise to me, in humility, and seat me in his own place; and he himself will sit down below me, because I am his son-in-law. I will then order one of the servants to bring a purse containing the pieces of gold which compose the dowry; and he will place it before the Wezir;

and I will add to it another purse, that he may know my manly spirit and excessive generosity, and that the world is contemptible in my eye: and when he addresseth me with ten words, I will answer him with two. And I will return to my house; and when any person cometh to me from the house of the Wezir, I will clothe him with a rich dress: but if any come with a present, I will return it: I will certainly not accept it. Then, on the night of the bridal display, I will attire myself in the most magnificent of my dresses, and sit upon a mattress covered with silk; and when my wife cometh to me, like the full moon, decked with her ornaments and apparel, I will command her to stand before me as stands the timid and the abject; and I will not look at her, on account of the haughtiness of my spirit and the gravity of my wisdom; so that the maids will say, O our master and our lord, may we be thy sacrifice! This thy wife, or rather thy handmaid, awaiteth thy kind regard, and is standing before thee: then graciously bestow on her one glance; for the posture hath become painful to her.—Upon this, I will raise my head, and look at her with one glance, and again incline my head downwards; and thus I will do until the ceremony of displaying her is finished; whereupon they will conduct her to the sleeping-chamber; and I will rise from my place, and go to another apartment, and put on my night-dress, and go to the chamber in which she is sitting, where I will seat myself upon the diwan; but I will not look towards her. The tire-women will urge me to approach her; but I will not hear their words, and will order some of the attendants to bring a purse containing five hundred pieces of gold for them, and command them to retire from the chamber. And when they have gone, I will seat myself by the side of the bride; but with averted countenance, that she may say, Verily this is a man of a haughty spirit. Then her mother will come to me, and will kiss my hands, and say to me, O my master, look upon thy handmaid with the eye of mercy; for she is submissively standing before thee. But I will return her no answer. And she will kiss my feet, again and again, and will say, O my master, my daughter is young, and hath seen no man but thee; and if she experience from thee repugnance, her

heart will break: incline to her, therefore, and speak to her, and calm her mind. And upon this I will look at her through the corner of my eye, and command her to remain standing before me, that she may taste the savour of humiliation, and know that I am the Sultan of the age. Then her mother will say to me, O my master, this is thy handmaid: have compassion upon her, and be gracious to her:—and she will order her to fill a cup with wine, and to put it to my mouth. So her daughter will say, O my lord, I conjure thee by Allah that thou reject not the cup from thy slave; for verily I am thy slave. But I will make her no reply; and she will urge me to take it, and will say, It must be drunk:—and will put it to my mouth: and upon this, I will shake my-hand in her face, and spurn her with my foot, and do thus.—So saying, he kicked the tray of glass, which, being upon a place elevated above the ground, fell, and all that was in it broke: there escaped nothing: and he cried out and said, All this is the result of my pride! And he slapped his face, and tore his clothes; the passengers gazing at him, while he wept, and exclaimed, Ah! O my grief!

The people were now repairing to perform the Friday-prayers; and some merely cast their eyes at him, while others noticed him not: but while he was in this state, deprived of his whole property, and weeping without intermission, a female approached him, on her way to attend the Friday-prayers: she was of admirable loveliness; the odour of musk was diffused from her; under her was a mule with a stuffed saddle covered with gold-embroidered silk; and with her was a number of servants; and when she saw the broken glass, and my brother's state and his tears, she was moved with pity for him, and asked respecting his case. She was answered, He had a tray of glass, by the sale of which to obtain his subsistence, and it is broken, and he is afflicted as thou seest:—and upon this, she called to one of the servants, saying, Give what thou hast with thee to this poor man. So he gave him a purse, and he took it, and when he had opened it, he found in it five hundred pieces of gold, whereupon he almost died from excessive joy, and offered up prayers for his benefactress.

He returned to his house a rich man, and sat reflecting, and lo, a person knocked at the door : he rose, therefore, and opened it ; and beheld an old woman whom he knew not, and she said to him, O my son, know that the time of prayer hath almost expired, and I am not prepared by ablution ; wherefore I beg that thou wilt admit me into thy house, that I may perform it. He replied, I hear and obey ;—and, retiring within, gave her permission to enter ; his mind still wandering from joy on account of the gold ; and when she had finished the ablution, she approached the spot where he was sitting, and there performed the prayers of two rek'ahs. She then offered up a supplication for my brother ; and he thanked her, and offered her two pieces of gold ; but when she saw this, she exclaimed, Extolled be God's perfection ! Verily I wonder at the person who fell in love with thee in thy beggarly condition ! Take back thy money from me, and if thou want it not, return it to her who gave it thee when thy glass broke.—O my mother, said he, how can I contrive to obtain access to her ? She answered, O my son, she hath an affection for thee ; but she is the wife of an affluent man : take then with thee all thy money, and when thou art with her be not deficient in courteousness and agreeable words ; so shalt thou obtain of her favours and her wealth whatever thou shalt desire. My brother, therefore, took all the gold, and arose and went with the old woman, hardly believing what she had told him ; and she proceeded, and my brother behind her, until they arrived at a great door, at which she knocked ; whereupon a Greek damsel came and opened the door, and the old woman entered, ordering my brother to do the same. He did so, and found himself in a large house, where he beheld a great furnished chamber, with curtains hung in it ; and, seating himself there, he put down the gold before him, and placed his turban on his knees ; and scarcely had he done so, when there came to him a damsel, the like of whom had never been seen, attired in most magnificent apparel. My brother stood up at her approach ; and when she beheld him, she laughed in his face, and rejoiced at his visit : then going to the door, she locked it ; after which she returned to my brother, and took his hand,

and both of them went together into a private chamber, carpeted with various kinds of silk, where my brother sat down, and she seated herself by his side, and toyed with him for a considerable time. She then rose, saying to him, Move not from this place until I return to thee ;—and was absent from him for a short period ; and as my brother was waiting for her, there came in to him a black slave, of gigantic stature, with a drawn sword, the brightness of which dazzled the sight ; and he exclaimed to my brother, Wo to thee ! Who brought thee to this place ? Thou vilest of men ! Thou misbegotten wretch, and nursling of impurity !—My brother was unable to make any reply ; his tongue was instantly tied ; and the slave laid hold upon him, and stripped him, and struck him more than eighty blows with the flat of his sword, until he fell sprawling upon the floor ; when he retired from him, concluding that he was dead, and uttered a great cry, so that the earth trembled, and the place resounded at his voice, saying, Where is El-Melihah ?—upon which a girl came to him, holding a handsome tray containing salt ; and with this she forthwith stuffed the flesh-wounds with which my brother's skin was gashed until they gaped open ; but he moved not, fearing the slave would discover that he was alive, and kill him. The girl then went away, and the slave uttered another cry, like the first, whereupon the old woman came to my brother, and, dragging him by the feet to a deep and dark vault, threw him into it upon a heap of slain. In this place he remained for two whole days ; and God (whose perfection be extolled !) made the salt to be the means of preserving his life, by stanching the flow of blood from his veins ; so, when he found that he had strength sufficient to move, he arose, and, opening a shutter in the wall, emerged from the place of the slain ; and God (to whom be ascribed all might and glory !) granted him his protection. He therefore proceeded in the darkness, and concealed himself in the passage until the morning, when the old woman went forth to seek another victim, and my brother, going out after her, without her knowledge, returned to his house.

He now occupied himself with the treatment of his wounds until he was restored ; and continued to watch for

the old woman, and constantly saw her taking men, one after another, and conducting them to the same house. But he uttered not a word on the subject; and when his health returned, and his strength was completely renewed, he took a piece of rag, and made of it a purse, which he filled with pieces of glass: he then tied it to his waist, and disguised himself so that no one would know him, in the dress of a foreigner; and, taking a sword, placed it within his clothes; and as soon as he saw the old woman, he said to her, in the dialect of a foreigner, Old woman, hast thou a pair of scales fit for weighing nine hundred pieces of gold? The old woman answered, I have a young son, a money-changer, and he hath all kinds of scales; therefore accompany me to him before he go forth from his abode, that he may weigh for thee thy gold. So my brother said, Walk on before me:—and she went, and my brother followed her until she arrived at the door, and knocked; upon which the girl came out, and laughed in his face; and the old woman said to her, I have brought you to-day some fat meat. The girl then took my brother's hand, and conducted him into the house (the same which he had entered before), and after she had sat with him a short time, she rose, saying to him, Quit not this place until I return to thee:—and she retired; and my brother had remained not long after when the slave came to him with the drawn sword, and said to him, Rise, thou unlucky! So my brother rose, and, as the slave walked before him, he put his hand to the sword which was concealed beneath his clothes, and struck the slave with it, and cut off his head; after which he dragged him by his feet to the vault, and called out, Where is El-Melihah? The slave-girl, therefore, came, having in her hand the tray containing the salt; but when she saw my brother with the sword in his hand, she turned back and fled: my brother, however, overtook her, and struck off her head. He then called out, Where is the old woman?—and she came; and he said to her, Dost thou know me, O malevolent hag? She answered, No, O my lord.—I am, said he, the man who had the pieces of gold, and in whose house thou performedst the ablution, and prayedst; after which, devising a stratagem against me,

thou betrayedst me into this place.—The old woman exclaimed, Fear God in thy treatment of me!—but my brother, turning towards her, struck her with the sword, and clove her in twain. He then went to search for the chief damsels, and when she saw him, her reason fled, and she implored his pardon; whereupon he granted her his pardon, and said to her, What occasioned thy falling into the hands of this black? She answered, I was a slave to one of the merchants, and this old woman used to visit me; and one day she said to me, We are celebrating a festivity, the like of which no one hath seen, and I have a desire that thou shouldst witness it. I replied, I hear and obey:—and arose, and clad myself in the best of my attire, and, taking with me a purse containing a hundred pieces of gold, proceeded with her until she entered this house, when suddenly this black took me, and I have continued with him in this state three years, through the stratagem of the old witch.—My brother then said to her, Is there any property of his in the house?—Abundance, she answered; and if thou canst remove it, do so:—and upon this, he arose and went with her, when she opened to him chests filled with purses, at the sight of which he was confounded; and she said to him, Go now, and leave me here, and bring some person to remove the property. So he went out, and, having hired ten men, returned; but on his arrival at the door, he found it open, and saw neither the damsels nor the purses; he found, however, some little money remaining, and the stuffs. He discovered, therefore, that she had eluded him; and he took the money that remained, and, opening the closets, took all the stuffs which they contained, leaving nothing in the house.

He passed the next night full of happiness; but when the morning came, he found at the door twenty soldiers, and on his going forth to them, they laid hold upon him, saying, The Wali summoneth thee. So they took him, and conducted him to the Wali, who, when he saw him, said to him, Whence obtainedst thou these stuffs?—Grant me indemnity, said my brother:—and the Wali gave him the handkerchief of indemnity; and my brother related to him all that had befallen him with the old woman from first to

last, and the flight of the damsel ; adding,—and of that which I have taken, take thou what thou wilt ; but leave me wherewith to procure my food. The Wali thereupon demanded the whole of the money and the stuffs ; but fearing that the Sultan might become acquainted with the matter, he retained a portion only, and gave the rest to my brother, saying to him, Quit this city, or I will hang thee. My brother replied, I hear and obey :—and went forth to one of the surrounding cities. Some robbers, however, came upon him, and stripped and beat him, and cut off his ears ; and I, having heard of his situation, went forth to him, taking to him some clothes ; and brought him back privily into the city, and supplied him with daily food and drink.

THE BARBER'S STORY OF HIS SIXTH BROTHER

My sixth brother (Shakalik), O Prince of the Faithful, had his lips cut off. He was in a state of extreme poverty, possessing nothing of the goods of this perishable world ; and he went forth one day to seek for something with which to stay his departing spirit, and on his way he beheld a handsome house, with a wide and lofty vestibule, at the door of which were servants, commanding and forbidding ; whereupon he inquired of one of the persons standing there, who answered, This house belongeth to a man of the sons of the Barmekis.⁷⁰ My brother, therefore, advanced to the door-keepers, and begged them to give him something ; and they said, Enter the door of the house, and thou wilt obtain what thou desirest of its master. So he entered the vestibule, and proceeded through it a while until he arrived at a mansion of the utmost beauty and elegance, having a garden in the midst of it, unsurpassed in beauty by anything that had ever been seen : its floors were paved with marble, and its curtains were hanging around. He knew not in which direction to go ; but advanced to the upper extremity ; and there he beheld a man of handsome countenance and beard, who, on seeing my brother, rose to him, and welcomed him, inquiring respecting his circumstances. He accordingly

informed him that he was in want; and when the master of the house heard his words, he manifested excessive grief, and, taking hold of his own clothes, rent them, and exclaimed, Am I in the city, and thou in it hungry? It is a thing that I cannot endure!—Then promising him every kind of happiness, he said, Thou must stay and partake of my salt. But my brother replied, O my master, I have not patience to wait; for I am in a state of extreme hunger.

Upon this, the master of the house called out, Boy, bring the basin and ewer!—and he said, O my guest, advance, and wash thy hand. He then performed the same motions as if he were washing his hand; and called to his attendants to bring the table; whereupon they began to come and go as though they were preparing it; after which the master of the house took my brother, and sat down with him at this imaginary table, and proceeded to move his hands and lips as if he were eating; saying to my brother, Eat, and be not ashamed, for thou art hungry, and I know how thou art suffering from the violence of thy hunger. My brother, therefore, made the same motions, as if he also were eating, while his host said to him, Eat, and observe this bread and its whiteness. To this, my brother at first made no reply; but observed in his own mind, Verily this is a man who loveth to jest with others:—so he said to him, O my master, in my life I have never seen bread more beautifully white than this, or any of sweeter taste:—on which the host rejoined, This was made by a female slave of mine whom I purchased for five hundred pieces of gold. He then called out, Boy, bring to us the sikbaj,* the like of which is not found among the dishes of Kings!—and, addressing my brother, he said, Eat, O my guest; for thou art hungry, vehemently so, and in absolute want of food. So my brother began to twist about his mouth, and to chew, as in eating. The master of the house now proceeded to demand different kinds of viands, one after another; and, though nothing was brought, he continued ordering my brother to eat. Next he called out, Boy, place before us the chickens stuffed with pistachio-nuts:—and said to his guest, Eat that of which thou hast never tasted the like.—O

* A dish composed of meat, wheat-flour, and vinegar.

my master, replied my brother, verily this dish hath not its equal in sweetness of flavour :—and the host, thereupon, began to put his hand to my brother's mouth as though he were feeding him with morsels ; and proceeded to enumerate to him the various different kinds of viands, and to describe their several excellencies ; while his hunger so increased that he longed for a cake of barley-bread. The master of the house then said to him, Hast thou tasted anything more delicious than the spices in these dishes ?—No, O my master, answered my brother.—Eat more then, resumed the host ; and be not ashamed.—I have eaten enough of the meats, replied the guest. So the man of the house called to his attendants to bring the sweets ; and they moved their hands about in the air as if they were bringing them ; whereupon the host said to my brother, Eat of this dish ; for it is excellent ; and of these kataif,* by my life ! and take this one before the sirup runs from it.—May I never be deprived of thee, O my master ! exclaimed my brother, proceeding to inquire of him respecting the abundance of musk in the kataif.—This, answered the host, is my usual custom in my house : they always put for me, in each of the kataif, a mithkal † of musk, and half a mithkal of ambergris.—All this time my brother was moving his head and mouth, and rolling about his tongue between his cheeks, as if he were enjoying the sweets. After this, the master of the house called out to his attendants, Bring the dried fruits !—and again they moved about their hands in the air as though they were doing what he ordered ; when he said to my brother, Eat of these almonds, and of these walnuts, and of these raisins ;—and so on ; enumerating the various kinds of dried fruits ; and added again, Eat, and be not ashamed.—O my master, replied my brother, I have had enough, and have not power to eat anything more :—but the host rejoined, If thou desire, O my guest, to eat more, and to delight thyself with extraordinary dainties, by Allah ! by Allah ! remain not hungry.

My brother now reflected upon his situation, and upon the manner in which this man was jesting with him, and said

* Small pancakes or other sweet pastry.

† The weight of a dinar.

within himself, By Allah, I will do to him a deed that shall make him repent before God of these actions! The man of the house next said to his attendants, Bring us the wine:—and, as before, they made the same motions with their hands in the air as if they were doing what he commanded; after which he pretended to hand to my brother a cup, saying, Take this cup, for it will delight thee:—and his guest replied, O my master, this is of thy bounty:—and he acted with his hand as though he were drinking it.—Hath it pleased thee? said the host.—O my master, answered my brother, I have never seen anything more delicious than this wine.—Drink then, rejoined the master of the house, and may it be attended with benefit and health:—and he himself pretended to drink, and to hand a second cup to my brother, who, after he had affected to drink it, feigned himself intoxicated, and, taking his host unawares, raised his hand until the whiteness of his arm-pit appeared, and struck him such a slap upon his neck that the chamber rang at the blow; and this he followed by a second blow; whereupon the man exclaimed, What is this, thou vilest of the creation?—O my master, answered my brother, I am thy slave, whom thou hast graciously admitted into thine abode, and thou hast fed him with thy provisions, and treated him with old wine, and he hath become intoxicated, and committed an outrage upon thee; but thou art of too exalted dignity to be angry with him for his ignorance.

When the master of the house heard these words of my brother, he uttered a loud laugh, and said to him, Verily for a long time have I made game of men, and jested with all persons accustomed to joking and rudeness, but I have not seen among them any who could endure this trick, nor any who had sagacity to conform to all my actions, except thee: now, therefore, I pardon thee; and be thou my companion in reality, and never relinquish me. He then gave orders to bring a number of the dishes above mentioned, and he and my brother ate together to satisfaction; after which they removed to the drinking-chamber, where female slaves like so many moons sang all kinds of melodies, and played on all kinds of musical instruments. There they drank until intoxication overcame them: the master of the house treated

my brother as a familiar friend, became greatly attached to him, and clad him with a costly dress ; and on the following morning they resumed their feasting and drinking. Thus they continued to live for a period of twenty years : the man then died, and the Sultan seized upon his property, and took possession of it.

My brother, upon this, went forth from the city, a fugitive ; and upon his way, a party of Arabs came upon him. They made him a captive ; and the man who captured him tortured him with beating, and said to him, By Allah, purchase thyself of me by wealth, or I will kill thee :—but my brother, weeping, replied, By Allah, I possess nothing, O Sheykh of the Arabs ; nor do I know the means of obtaining any property : I am thy captive ; I have fallen into thy hands, and do with me what thou wilt. And immediately the tyrannical Bedawi drew forth from his girdle a broad-bladed knife (such as, if plunged into the neck of a camel, would cut it across from one jugular vein to the other), and, taking it in his right hand, approached my poor brother, and cut off with it his lips ; still urging his demand.—Now this Bedawi had a handsome wife, who, when he was absent, used to manifest a strong affection for my brother ; though he observed a proper decorum towards her, fearing God (whose name be exalted !) ; and it happened, one day, that she had called him, and seated him with her ; but while they were together, lo, her husband came in upon them ; and when he beheld my brother, he exclaimed, Wo to thee, thou base wretch ! Dost thou desire now to corrupt my wife ?—Then drawing his knife, he inflicted upon him another cruel wound ; after which he mounted him upon a camel, and, having cast him upon a mountain, left him there, and went his way. Some travellers, however, passed by him, and when they discovered him, they gave him food and drink, and acquainted me with his case : so I went forth to him, and conveyed him back into the city, and allotted him a sufficient maintenance.

Now I have come unto thee, O Prince of the Faithful, continued the barber, and feared to return to my house without relating to thee these facts ; for to neglect doing so had been an error. Thus thou hast seen that, although

having six brothers, I am of a more upright character than they.—But when the Prince of the Faithful had heard my story, and all that I had related to him respecting my brothers, he laughed, and said, Thou hast spoken truth, O Samit (O silent man); thou art a person of few words, and devoid of impertinence; now, however, depart from this city, and take up thine abode in another. So he banished me from Baghdad; and I journeyed through various countries, and traversed many regions, until I heard of his death, and of the succession of another Khalifeh; when, returning to my city, I met with this young man, unto whom I did the best of deeds, and who, had it not been for me, had been slain: yet he hath accused me of that which is not in my character; for all that he hath related of me, with respect to impertinence, and loquacity, and dulness, and want of taste, is false, O people.—

The tailor then proceeded thus:—When we heard the story of the barber, and were convinced of his impertinence and loquacity, and that the young man had been treated unjustly by him, we seized hold upon him, and put him in confinement, and, seating ourselves to keep watch over him, ate and drank; and the feast was finished in the most agreeable manner. We remained sitting together until the call to afternoon-prayers, when I went forth, and returned to my house; but my wife looked angrily at me, and said, Thou hast been all the day enjoying thy pleasure while I have been sitting at home sorrowful; now if thou go not forth with me and amuse me for the remainder of the day, thy refusal will be the cause of my separation from thee. So I took her and went out with her, and we amused ourselves until nightfall, when, returning home, we met this humpback, full of drink, and repeating verses; upon which I invited him to come home with us, and he consented. I then went forth to buy some fried fish, and having bought it and returned, we sat down to eat; and my wife took a morsel of bread and a piece of fish, and put them into his mouth, and choked him, so that he died; whereupon I took him up, and contrived to throw him into the house of this

physician, and he contrived to throw him into the house of the steward, and the steward contrived to throw him in the way of the broker.—This is the story of what happened to me yesterday. Is it not more wonderful than that of the humpback ?

When the King had heard this story, he ordered certain of his chamberlains to go with the tailor, and to bring the barber ; saying to them, His presence is indispensable, that I may hear his talk, and it may be the cause of the deliverance of you all : then we will bury this humpback decently in the earth, for he bath been dead since yesterday ; and we will make him a monument round his grave, since he hath been the occasion of our acquaintance with these wonderful stories.

The chamberlains and the tailor soon came back, after having gone to the place of confinement and brought the barber, whom they placed before the King ; and when the King beheld him, he saw him to be an old man, passed his ninetieth year, of dark countenance, and white beard and eyebrows, with small ears, and long nose, and a haughty aspect. The King laughed at the sight of him, and said to him, O silent man, I desire that thou relate to me somewhat of thy stories.—O King of the age, replied the barber, what is the occasion of the presence of this Christian and this Jew and this Muslim, and this humpback lying dead among you ; and what is the reason of this assembly ?—Wherefore dost thou ask this ? said the King. The barber answered, I ask it in order that the King may know me to be no impertinent person, nor one who meddleth with that which doth not concern him, and that I am free from the loquacity of which they accuse me : for I am fortunate in my characteristic appellation, since they have surnamed me Es-Samit ; and, as the poet hath said,—

Seldom hast thou seen a person honoured with a surname, but thou wilt find, if thou search, that his character is expressed by it.

The King therefore said, Explain to the barber the case of

this humpback, and what happened to him yesterday evening, and explain to him also what the Christian hath related, and the Jew and the steward and the tailor. So they repeated to him the stories of all these persons.

The barber, thereupon, shook his head, saying, By Allah, this is a wonderful thing!—Uncover this humpback, that I may examine him.—And they did so. He then seated himself at his head, and, taking it up, placed it upon his lap, and looked at his face, and laughed so violently that he fell backwards, exclaiming, For every death there is a cause; and the death of this humpback is most wonderful: it is worthy of being registered in the records, that posterity may be instructed by this event!—The King, astonished at his words, said, O Samit, explain to us the reason of thy saying this.—O King, replied the barber, by thy beneficence, life is yet in the humpback! He then drew forth from his bosom a pot containing some ointment, and with this he anointed the neck of the humpback; after which he covered it up until it perspired; when he took forth an iron forceps, and put it down his throat, and extracted the piece of fish with its bone, and all the people saw them. The humpback now sprang upon his feet, and sneezed, and, recovering his consciousness, drew his hands over his face, and exclaimed, There is no Deity but God! Mohammad is God's Apostle! God bless and save him!—and all who were present were astonished at the sight, and the King laughed until he became insensible; as did also the other spectators. The King exclaimed, By Allah, this accident is wonderful! I have never witnessed anything more strange!—and added, O Muslims! O assembly of soldiers! have ye ever in the course of your lives seen any one die and after that come to life? But had not God blessed him with this barber, the humpback had been to-day numbered among the people of the other world; for the barber hath been the means of restoring him to life.—They replied, This is indeed a wonderful thing!

The King then gave orders to record this event; and when they had done so, he placed the record in the royal library; and he bestowed dresses of honour upon the Jew and the Christian and the steward; upon each of them, a

costly dress : the tailor he appointed to be his own tailor, granting him regular allowances, and reconciling him and the humpback with each other : the humpback he honoured with a rich and beautiful dress, and with similar allowances, and appointed him his cup-companion ; and upon the barber also he conferred the like favours, rewarding him with a costly dress of honour, regular allowances, and a fixed salary, and appointing him state-barber, and his own cup-companion : so they all lived in the utmost happiness and comfort until they were visited by the terminator of delights and the separator of friends.

CHAPTER VI

[NIGHTS 32—36]

THE STORY OF NUR-ED-DIN AND ENIS-EL-JELIS

THERE was, in El-Basrah, a certain King who loved the poor and indigent, and regarded his subjects with benevolence ; he bestowed of his wealth upon him who believed in Mohammad (God bless and save him !) and was such as one of the poets who have written of him hath thus described :—

He used his lances as pens ; and the hearts of his enemies, as paper ;
their blood being his ink :

And hence, I imagine, our forefathers applied to the lance the term
Khattiyeh.

The name of this King was Mohammad the son of Suleyman Ez-Zeyni ; and he had two Wezirs ; one of whom was named El-Mo'in the son of Sawi ; and the other, El-Fadl the son of Khakan. El-Fadl the son of Khakan was the most generous of the people of his age, upright in conduct, so that all hearts agreed in loving him, and the wise complied with his counsel, and all the people supplicated for him length of life ; for he was a person of auspicious aspect, a preventer of evil and mischief : but the Wezir El-Mo'in the son of Sawi hated others, and loved not good ; he was a man of inauspicious aspect ; and in the same degree that the people loved Fadl-ed-Din the son of Khakan, so did they abhor El-Mo'in the son of Sawi, in accordance with the decree of the Almighty.

Now the King Mohammad the son of Suleyman Ez-Zeyni was sitting one day upon his throne, surrounded by the officers of his court, and he called to his Wezir El-Fadl the son of Khakan, and said to him, I desire a female slave

unsurpassed in beauty by any in her age, of perfect loveliness, and exquisite symmetry, and endowed with all praiseworthy qualities.—Such as this, replied his courtiers, is not to be found for less than ten thousand pieces of gold. And the Sultan thereupon called out to the treasurer, saying, Carry ten thousand pieces of gold to the house of El-Fadl the son of Khakan. So the treasurer did as he commanded, and the Wezir departed, after the Sultan had ordered him to repair every day to the market, and to commission the brokers to procure what he had described, and had commanded also that no female slave of a greater price than one thousand pieces of gold should be sold without having been shewn to the Wezir.

The brokers, therefore, sold no female slave without shewing her to him, and he complied with the King's command, and thus he continued to do for a considerable time, no slave pleasing him: but on a certain day, one of the brokers came to the mansion of the Wezir El-Fadl, and found that he had mounted to repair to the palace of the King; and he laid hold upon his stirrup, and repeated these two verses:—

O thou who hast reanimated what was rotten in the state! Thou art the Wezir ever aided by Heaven.

Thou hast revived the noble qualities that were extinct among men.
May thy conduct never cease to be approved by God!

He then said, O my master, the female slave for the procuring of whom the noble mandate was issued hath arrived. The Wezir replied, Bring her hither to me. So the man returned, and, after a short absence, came again, accompanied by a damsel of elegant stature, high-bosomed, with black eyelashes, and smooth cheek, and slender waist, and large hips, clad in the handsomest apparel; the moisture of her lips was sweeter than sirup; her figure put to shame the branches of the Oriental willow; and her speech was more soft than the zephyr passing over the flowers of the garden; as one of her describers hath thus expressed:—

Her skin is like silk, and her speech is soft, neither redundant nor deficient:

Her eyes, God said to them, Be,—and they were, affecting men's hearts with the potency of wine.

May my love for her grow more warm each night, and cease not
until the day of judgment!

The locks on her brow are dark as night, while her forehead shines
like the gleam of morning.

When the Wezir beheld her, she pleased him extremely, and he looked towards the broker, and said to him, What is the price of this damsel? The broker answered, The price bidden for her hath amounted to ten thousand pieces of gold, and her owner hath sworn that this sum doth not equal the cost of the chickens which she hath eaten, nor the cost of the dresses which she hath bestowed upon her teachers; for she hath learnt writing and grammar and lexicology, and the interpretation of the Kur'an, and the fundamentals of law and religion, and medicine, and the computation of the calendar, and the art of playing upon musical instruments. The Wezir then said, Bring to me her master:—and the broker immediately brought him; and lo, he was a foreigner, who had lived so long that time had reduced him to bones and skin, as the poet hath said,—

How hath time made me to tremble! For time is powerful and severe.

I used to walk without being weary; but now I am weary and do not walk.

And the Wezir said to him, Art thou content to receive for this damsel ten thousand pieces of gold from the Sultan Mohammad the son of Suleyman Ez-Zeyni? The foreigner answered, As she is for the Sultan, it is incumbent on me to give her as a present to him, without price. So the Wezir, upon this, ordered that the money should be brought, and then weighed the pieces of gold for the foreigner; after which, the slave-broker addressed the Wezir, and said, With the permission of our lord the Wezir, I will speak.—Impart what thou hast to say, replied the Wezir.—It is my opinion then, said the broker, that thou shouldest not take up this damsel to the Sultan to-day; for she hath just arrived from her journey, and the change of air hath affected her, and the journey hath fatigued her; but rather let her remain with thee in thy palace ten days, that she may take rest, and her beauty will improve: then cause her to be taken into the

bath, and attire her in clothes of the handsomest description, and go up with her to the Sultan: so shalt thou experience more abundant good fortune. And the Wezir considered the advice of the slave-broker, and approved it. He therefore took her into his palace, and gave her a private apartment to herself, allotting her every day what she required of food and drink and other supplies, and she continued a while in this state of enjoyment.

Now the Wezir El-Fadl had a son like the shining full moon, with brilliant countenance, and red cheek, marked with a mole like a globule of ambergris, and with grey down. The youth knew not of this damsel, and his father had charged her, saying, Know that I have purchased thee for the King Mohammad the son of Suleyman Ez-Zeyni, and that I have a son who hath not left a girl in the quarter without making love to her: therefore keep thyself concealed from him, and beware of shewing him thy face, or suffering him to hear thy voice. The damsel replied, I hear and obey:—and he left her and departed. And it happened, as fate had ordained, that she went one day into the bath which was in the house, and, after certain of the female slaves had bathed her, she attired herself in rich apparel, and her beauty and loveliness increased in consequence. She then went in to the Wezir's wife, and kissed her hand, and she said to her, May it be favourable, O Enis-el-Jelis! How didst thou find this bath?—O my mistress, she answered, I wanted nothing but thy presence there. And upon this, the mistress of the house said to the female slaves, Arise, and let us go into the bath. And they complied with her command, and went, accompanied by their mistress, who first charged two young slave-girls to keep the door of the private apartment in which was Enis-el-Jelis, saying to them, Suffer no one to go in to the damsel:—and they replied, We hear and obey. But while Enis-el-Jelis was sitting in her chamber, lo, the Wezir's son, whose name was 'Ali Nur-ed-Din, came in, and asked after his mother and the family. The two girls answered, They are gone into the bath. Now the damsel Enis-el-Jelis heard the speech of 'Ali Nur-ed-Din as she sat in her chamber, and she said within herself, I wonder what this youth is like, of

whom the Wezir hath told me that he hath not left a girl in the quarter without making love to her: by Allah, I have a desire to see him. She then rose upon her feet, fresh as she was from the bath, and, approaching the door of the chamber, looked at 'Ali Nur-ed-Din, and beheld him to be a youth like the full moon. The sight of him occasioned her a thousand sighs; and a look from the youth, at her, affected him also in the same manner. Each was caught in the snare of the other's love, and the youth approached the two slave-girls, and cried out at them; whereupon they fled from before him, and stopped at a distance, looking to see what he would do. He then advanced to the door of the chamber, and, opening it, went in, and said to the damsel, Art thou she whom my father hath purchased for me? She answered, Yes. And upon this, the youth, who was in a state of intoxication, went up to her, and embraced her, while she, in like manner, threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him. But the two slave-girls, having seen their young master enter the chamber of the damsel Enis-el-Jelis, cried out. The youth, therefore, soon ran forth, and fled for safety, fearing the consequence of his intrusion; and when the mistress of the house heard the cry of the two slave-girls, she came out dripping from the bath, saying, What is the cause of this cry in the house? And when she drew near to the two slave-girls whom she had placed at the door of the private chamber, she said to them, Wo to you! What is the matter?—They answered, as soon as they beheld her, Our master 'Ali Nur-ed-Din came to us and beat us, and we fled from him, and he went into the chamber of Enis-el-Jelis, and when we cried out to thee he fled. The mistress of the house then went to Enis-el-Jelis, and said to her, What is the news?—O my mistress, she answered, as I was sitting here, a youth of handsome person came in to me, and said to me, Art thou she whom my father hath purchased for me?—And I answered, Yes.—By Allah, O my mistress, I believed that what he said was true; and he came up to me and embraced me, and kissed me three times, and left me overcome by his love.

Upon this, the mistress of the house wept, and slapped her face, and her female slaves did the like, fearing for 'Ali

Nur-ed-Din, lest his father should slay him ; and while they were in this state, lo, the Wezir came in, and inquired what had happened. His wife said to him, Swear that thou wilt listen to that which I shall say. He replied, Well. So she told him what his son had done ; and he mourned, and rent his clothes, and slapped his face, and plucked his beard. His wife then said to him, Kill not thyself. I will give thee, of my own property, ten thousand pieces of gold, her price.—But upon this, he raised his head towards her, and said to her, Wo to thee ! I want not her price ; but I fear the loss of my life and my property.—Wherefore, O my master ? she asked.—Knowest thou not, said he, that we have this enemy El-Mo'in the son of Sawi ? When he heareth of this event, he will repair to the Sultan, and say to him, Thy Wezir whom thou imaginest to love thee hath received from thee ten thousand pieces of gold, and purchased therewith a female slave such as no one hath seen equalled, and when she pleased him, he said to his son, Take her ; for thou art more worthy of her than the Sultan :—and he took her ; and the damsels is now with him.—Then the King will say, Thou liest. And he will say to the King, With thy permission, I will break in upon him suddenly, and bring her to thee. And he will give him permission to do so : he will therefore make a sudden attack upon the house, and take the damsels, and conduct her into the presence of the Sultan, and he will question her, and she will not be able to deny : he will then say, O my lord, I give thee good counsel, but I am not in favour with thee :—and the Sultan will make an example of me, and all the people will make me a gazing-stock, and my life will be lost.—His wife, however, replied, Acquaint no one ; for this thing hath happened privily : commit, therefore, thine affair unto God, in this extremity. And upon this, the heart of the Wezir was quieted, and his mind was relieved.

Such was the case of the Wezir.—Now as to Nur-ed-Din, he feared the result of his conduct, and so passed each day in the gardens, not returning to his mother until towards the close of the night : he then slept in her apartment, and rose before morning without being seen by any one else. Thus he continued to do for the space of a month, not seeing the

face of his father; and at length his mother said to his father, O my master, wilt thou lose the damsel and lose the child? For if it long continue thus with the youth, he will flee his country.—And what is to be done? said he. She answered, Sit up this night, and when he cometh, lay hold upon him, and be reconciled to him, and give him the damsel; for she loveth him, and he loveth her; and I will give thee her price. So the Wezir sat up the whole night, and when his son came, he laid hold upon him, and would have cut his throat; but his mother came to his succour, and said to her husband, What dost thou desire to do unto him? He answered her, I desire to slay him. The youth then said to his father, Am I of so small account in thy estimation? And upon this, the eyes of his father filled with tears, and he said to him, O my son, is the loss of my property and my life of small account with thee?—Listen, O my father, rejoined the youth:—and he implored his forgiveness. So the Wezir rose from the breast of his son, and was moved with compassion for him; and the youth rose, and kissed his father's hand; and the Wezir said, O my son, if I knew that thou wouldest act equitably to Enis-el-Jelis, I would give her to thee.—O my father, replied the youth, wherefore should I not act equitably towards her? And his father said, I charge thee, O my son, that thou take not a wife to share her place, and that thou do her no injury, nor sell her. He replied, O my father, I swear to thee that I will neither take a wife to share her place, nor sell her:—and he promised him by oaths to act as he had said, and took up his abode with the damsel, and remained with her a year; and God (whose name be exalted!) caused the King to forget the affair of the female slave; but the matter became known to El-Mo'in the son of Sawi; yet he could not speak of it, on account of the high estimation in which the other Wezir was held by the Sultan.

After this year had expired, the Wezir Fadl-ed-Din the son of Khakan entered the bath, and came out in a state of excessive perspiration, in consequence of which the external air smote him, so that he became confined to his bed, and long remained sleepless; and his malady continued unremittingly; so he called, thereupon, his son, 'Ali Nur-ed-Din,

and when he came before him, said to him, O my son, verily the means of life are apportioned, and its period is decreed, and every soul must drink the cup of death. I have nothing with which to charge thee but the fear of God, and forethought with regard to the results of thine actions, and that thou conduct thyself kindly to the damsels Enis-el-Jelis.—O my father, said the youth, who is like unto thee? Thou hast been celebrated for virtuous actions, and the praying of the preachers for thee on the pulpits.—O my son, rejoined the Wezir, I hope for the approbation of God, whose name be exalted! And then he pronounced the two professions of the faith, and uttered a sigh, and was recorded among the company of the blest. And upon this, the palace was filled with shrieking, and the news reached the ears of the Sultan, and the people of the city heard of the death of El-Fadl the son of Khakan, and even the boys in the schools wept for him. His son 'Ali Nur-ed-Din arose, and prepared his funeral, and the Emirs and Wezirs and other officers of the state attended it, and among them was the Wezir El-Mo'in the son of Sawi; and as the procession passed out from the mansion, one of the mourners recited these verses:—

I said to the man who was appointed to wash him,—Would that
he had yielded obedience to my counsel,—
Put away from him the water, and wash him with the tears of
honour, shed in lamentation for him :
And remove these fragrant substances collected for his corpse, and
perfume him rather with the odours of his praise :
And order the noble angels to carry him, in honour. Dost thou
not behold them attending him ?
Cause not men's necks to be strained by bearing him : enough are
they laden already by his benefits.

'Ali Nur-ed-Din for a long time remained in a state of violent grief for the loss of his father ; but as he was sitting one day in his father's house, a person knocked at the door, and he rose up and opened it, and lo, there was a man who was one of his father's intimate companions, and he kissed the hand of Nur-ed-Din, and said to him, O my master, he who hath left a son like thee hath not died. This is the destination of the lord of the first and the last among

mankind.* O my master, cheer up thy heart, and give over mourning.—And upon this, 'Ali Nur-ed-Din arose, and went to the guest-chamber, and removed thither all that he required, and his companions came together to him, and he took again his slave. Ten of the sons of the merchants became his associates, and he gave entertainment after entertainment, and began to be lavish with presents. His steward, therefore, came in to him, and said to him, O my master Nur-ed-Din, hast thou not heard the saying, He who expendeth and doth not calculate is reduced to poverty? This profuse expenditure, and these magnificent presents, will annihilate the property.—But when 'Ali Nur-ed-Din heard these words of his steward, he looked at him, and replied, Of all that thou hast said to me, I will not attend to one word. How excellent is the saying of the poet:—

If I be possessed of wealth and be not liberal, may my hand never be extended, nor my foot raised!

Shew me the avaricious who hath attained glory by his avarice, and the munificent who hath died through his munificence.

Know, O steward, he continued, that if there remain in thy hands what will suffice for my dinner, thou shalt not burden me with anxiety respecting my supper.—So the steward left him, and went his way; and 'Ali Nur-ed-Din resumed his habits of extravagant generosity: whenever any one of his companions said, Verily this thing is beautiful!—he would reply, It is a present to thee:—and if any said, O my master, verily such a house is delightful!—he would reply, It is a present to thee.

He ceased not to give entertainments to his companions from the commencement of day, one after another, until he had passed in this manner a whole year; after which, as he was sitting with them, he heard the slave-girl recite these two verses:—

Thou thoughtest well of the days when they went well with thee,
and fearedst not the evil that destiny was bringing.

Thy nights were peaceful, and thou wast deceived by them: in the
midst of their brightness there cometh gloom.

And immediately after, a person knocked at the door: so

* The Prophet Mohammad.

Nur-ed-Din rose, and one of his companions followed him without his knowledge; and when he opened the door, he beheld his steward, and said to him, What is the news?—O my master, answered the steward, that which I feared on thy account hath happened to thee.—How is that? asked Nur-ed-Din. The steward answered, Know that there remaineth not of thy property in my hands, anything equivalent to a piece of silver, or less than a piece of silver; and these are the accounts of thy expenses, and of thy original property. When 'Ali Nur-ed-Din heard these words, he hung down his head towards the ground, and exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God! And the man who had followed him secretly to pry into his case, as soon as he heard what the steward told him, returned to his companions, and said to them, See what ye will do; for 'Ali Nur-ed-Din hath become a bankrupt. So when Nur-ed-Din returned to them, grief appeared to them in his countenance, and immediately one of them rose, and, looking towards him, said to him, O my master, I desire that thou wouldest permit me to depart.—Why thus depart to-day? said Nur-ed-Din. His guest answered, My wife is to give birth to a child this night, and it is impossible for me to be absent from her: I desire, therefore, to go and see her. And he gave him leave. Then another rose, and said to him, O my master Nur-ed-Din, I desire to-day to visit my brother; for he celebrateth the circumcision of his son. Thus each of them asked leave of him deceitfully, and went his way, until all had departed.

So 'Ali Nur-ed-Din remained alone; and he called his slave-girl, and said to her, O Enis-el-Jelis, seest thou not what hath befallen me? And he related to her what the steward had told him. She replied, O my master, for some nights past, I have been anxious to speak to thee of this affair; but I heard thee reciting these two verses:—

When fortune is liberal to thee, be thou liberal to all others before
she escape from thee:

For liberality will not annihilate thy wealth when she is favourable;
nor avarice preserve it when she deserteth thee.

And when I heard thee repeat these words, I was silent,

and would not make any remark to thee.—O Enis-el-Jelis, he rejoined, thou knowest that I have not expended my wealth but on my companions ; and I do not think that they will abandon me without relief.—By Allah, said she, they will be of no use to thee. But he said, I will immediately arise and go to them, and knock at their doors : perhaps I shall obtain from them something which I will employ as a capital wherewith to trade, and I will cease from diversion and sport. So he arose instantly, and proceeded without stopping until he arrived at the by-street in which his ten companions resided ; for they all lived in that same street : and he advanced to the first door, and knocked ; and there came forth to him a slave-girl, who said to him, Who art thou ? He answered, Say to thy master,—'Ali Nur-ed-Din is standing at the door, and saith to thee, Thy slave kisseth thy hands, looking for a favour from thee.—And the girl entered, and acquainted her master ; but he called out to her, saying, Return, and tell him, He is not here.—The girl, therefore, returned to Nur-ed-Din, and said to him, My master, Sir, is not here. And he went on, saying within himself, If this is a knave, and hath denied himself, another is not. He then advanced to the next door, and said as he had before ; and the second also denied himself ; and Nur-ed-Din exclaimed,—

They are gone, who, if thou stoodest at their door, would bestow upon thee the bounty thou desirest.

By Allah, he added, I must try all of them : perchance one of them may stand me in the place of all the others. And he went round to all the ten ; but found not that one of them would open the door, or shew himself, or even order him a cake of bread ; and he recited the following verses :—

A man in prosperity resembleth a tree, around which people flock as long as it hath fruit ;
 But as soon as it hath dropped all that it bore, they disperse from beneath it, and seek another.
 Perdition to all the people of this age ! for I find not one man of integrity among ten.

He then returned to his slave : his anxiety had increased,

and she said to him, O my master, said I not unto thee that they would not profit thee?—By Allah, he replied, not one of them shewed me his face.—O my master, rejoined she, sell of the moveables of the house a little at a time, and expend the produce. And he did so until he had sold all that was in the house, and there remained nothing in his possession; and upon this he looked towards Enis-el-Jelis, and said to her, What shall we do now?—It is my advice, O my master, she answered, that thou arise immediately, and take me to the market, and sell me; for thou knowest that thy father purchased me for ten thousand pieces of gold, and perhaps God may open to thee a way to obtain a part of this price; and if God have decreed our reunion, we shall meet again. But he replied, O Enis-el-Jelis, it is not easy for me to endure thy separation for one hour.—Nor is the like easy to me, said she: but necessity is imperious. And upon this, he took Enis-el-Jelis, his tears flowing down his cheeks, and went and delivered her to the broker, saying to him, Know the value of that which thou art to cry for sale.—O my master Nur-ed-Din, replied the broker, noble qualities are held in remembrance. Is she not Enis-el-Jelis, whom thy father purchased of me for ten thousand pieces of gold?—He answered, Yes. And the broker thereupon went to the merchants; but he found that they had not all yet assembled; so he waited until the rest had come, and the market was filled with all varieties of female slaves, Turkish and Greek and Circassian and Georgian and Abyssinian; and when he beheld its crowded state, he arose and exclaimed, O merchants! O possessors of wealth! everything that is round is not a nut; nor is everything long, a banana; nor is everything that is red, meat; nor is everything white, fat; nor is everything that is ruddy, wine; nor is everything tawny, a date! O merchants! this precious pearl, whose value no money can equal, with what sum will ye open the bidding for her?—And one of the merchants answered, With four thousand and five hundred pieces of gold.

But, lo, the Wezir El-Mo'in the son of Sawi was in the market, and, seeing 'Ali Nur-ed-Din standing there, he said within himself, What doth he want here, having nothing left

wherewith to purchase female slaves? Then casting his eyes around, and hearing the broker as he stood crying in the market with the merchants around him, he said within himself, I do not imagine anything else than that he hath become a bankrupt, and come forth with the slave-girl to sell her; and if this be the case, how pleasant to my heart! He then called the crier, who approached him, and kissed the ground before him; and the Wezir said to him, I desire this female slave whom thou art crying for sale. The broker, therefore, being unable to oppose his wish, brought the slave and placed her before him; and when he beheld her, and considered her charms, her elegant figure and her soft speech, he was delighted with her, and said to the broker, To what has the bidding for her amounted? The broker answered, Four thousand and five hundred pieces of gold. And as soon as the merchants heard this, not one of them could bid another piece of silver or of gold; but all of them drew back, knowing the tyrannical conduct of that Wezir. El-Mo'in the son of Sawi then looked towards the broker, and said to him, Why standest thou still? Take away the slave-girl for me at the price of four thousand and five hundred pieces of gold, and thou wilt have five hundred for thyself.—So the broker went to 'Ali Nur-ed-Din, and said to him, O my master, the slave-girl is lost to thee without price.—How so? said Nur-ed-Din. The broker answered, We opened the bidding for her at four thousand and five hundred pieces of gold; but this tyrant El-Mo'in the son of Sawi came into the market, and when he beheld the damsel she pleased him, and he said to me, Ask her owner if he will agree for four thousand pieces of gold, and five hundred for thee:—and I doubt not but he knoweth that the slave belongeth to thee; and if he give thee her price immediately, it will be through the goodness of God; but I know, from his injustice, that he will write thee an order upon some of his agents for the money, and then send to them and desire them to give thee nothing; and every time that thou shalt go to demand it of them, they will say to thee, To-morrow we will pay thee:—and they will not cease to promise thee, and to defer from day to day, notwithstanding thy pride; and when they are overcome by thy importunity they will say, Give us the written order:—and

as soon as they have received the paper from thee they will tear it in pieces : so thou wilt lose the price of the slave.

When Nur-ed-Din, therefore, heard these words of the broker, he said to him, What is to be done? The broker answered, I will give thee a piece of advice, and if thou receive it from me, thou wilt have better fortune.—What is it? asked Nur-ed-Din.—That thou come to me immediately, answered the broker, while I am standing in the midst of the market, and take the slave-girl from me, and give her a blow with thy hand, and say to her, Wo to thee! I have expiated my oath that I swore, and brought thee to the market, because I swore to thee that thou shouldst be exposed in the market, and that the broker should cry thee for sale.—If thou do this, perhaps the trick will deceive him and the people, and they will believe that thou tookest her not to the market but to expiate the oath.—This, replied Nur-ed-Din, is the right counsel. So the broker returned into the midst of the market, and, taking hold of the hand of the slave-girl, made a sign to the Wezir El-Mo'in the son of Sawi, saying, O my lord, this is her owner who hath just come. Then 'Ali Nur-ed-Din advanced to the broker, and tore the damsel from him, and struck her with his hand, saying to her, Wo to thee! I have brought thee to the market for the sake of expiating my oath. Go home, and disobey me not again. I want not thy price, that I should sell thee; and if I sold the furniture of the house and everything else of the kind over and over again, their produce would not amount to thy price.—But when El-Mo'in the son of Sawi beheld Nur-ed-Din, he said to him, Wo to thee! Hast thou anything left to be sold or bought?—And he would have laid violent hands upon him. The merchants then looked towards Nur-ed-Din (and they all loved him), and he said to them, Here am I before you, and ye have all known his tyranny.—By Allah, exclaimed the Wezir, were it not for you, I had killed him! Then all of them made signs, one to another, with the eye, and said, Not one of us will interfere between thee and him. And upon this, 'Ali Nur-ed-Din went up to the Wezir, the son of Sawi (and Nur-ed-Din was a man of courage), and he dragged the Wezir from his saddle, and threw him upon the ground. There was at that spot a

kneading-place for mud,* and the Wezir fell into the midst of it, and Nur-ed-Din beat him with his fist, and a blow fell upon his teeth, by which his beard became dyed with his blood. Now there were with the Wezir ten memluks, and when they saw Nur-ed-Din treat their master in this manner, they put their hands upon the hilts of their swords, and would have fallen upon him and cut him in pieces ; but the people said to them, This is a Wezir, and this is the son of a Wezir, and perhaps they may make peace with each other, and ye will incur the anger of both of them ; or perhaps a blow may fall upon your master, and ye will all of you die the most ignominious of deaths : it is advisable, therefore, that ye interfere not between them.—And when 'Ali Nur-ed-Din had ceased from beating the Wezir, he took his slave-girl, and returned to his house.

The Wezir, the son of Sawi, then immediately arose, and his dress, which before was white, was now dyed with three colours, the colour of mud, and the colour of blood, and the colour of ashes ; and when he beheld himself in this condition, he took a round mat, and hung it to his neck, and took in his hand two bundles of coarse grass, and went and stood beneath the palace of the Sultan, and cried out, O King of the age ! I am oppressed !—So they brought him before the King, who looked at him attentively, and saw that he was his Wezir, El-Mo'in the son of Sawi. He said, therefore, Who hath done thus unto thee ?—and the Wezir cried and moaned, and repeated these two verses :—

Shall fortune oppress me while thou existest ; and the dogs devour me when thou art a lion ?

Shall all else who are dry drink freely from thy tanks, and I thirst in thine asylum when thou art as rain ?

—O my lord, he continued, thus is every one who loveth thee and serveth thee : these afflictions always befall him.—And who, said the King again, hath done thus unto thee ?—Know, answered the Wezir, that I went forth to-day to the market of the female slaves with the idea of buying a

* By this is meant, a place where mud was kneaded to be employed in building. The mortar generally used in the construction of Arab houses is composed of mud in the proportion of one-half, with a fourth part of lime, and the remaining part of the ashes of straw and rubbish.

cook-maid, and saw in the market a slave-girl the like of whom I had never in my life beheld, and the broker said that she belonged to 'Ali Nur-ed-Din. Now our lord the Sultan had given his father ten thousand pieces of gold to buy for him with it a beautiful female slave, and he bought that girl, and she pleased him; so he gave her to his son; and when his father died, the son pursued the path of prodigality, until he sold all his houses and gardens and utensils; and when he had become a bankrupt, nothing else remaining in his possession, he took the slave-girl to the market to sell her, and delivered her to the broker: so he cried her for sale, and the merchants continued bidding for her until her price amounted to four thousand pieces of gold; whereupon I said to myself, I will buy this for our lord the Sultan; for her original price was from him. I therefore said, O my son, receive her price, four thousand pieces of gold. But when he heard my words, he looked at me and replied, O ill-omened old man! I will sell her to the Jews and the Christians rather than to thee.—I then said to him, I would not buy her for myself, but for our lord the Sultan, who is our benefactor. As soon, however, as he had heard these words from me, he was filled with rage, and dragged me and threw me down from the horse, notwithstanding my advanced age, and beat me, and ceased not to do so until he left me in the state in which thou seest me. Nothing exposed me to all this ill treatment but my coming to purchase this slave-girl for your majesty.—The Wezir then threw himself upon the ground, and lay weeping and trembling.

Now when the Sultan beheld his condition, and had heard his speech, the vein of anger swelled between his eyes, and he looked towards the members of his court who were attending him; whereupon forty swordsmen stood before him, and he said to them, Descend immediately to the house of 'Ali the son of El-Fadl the son of Khakan, and plunder it and demolish it, and bring hither him and the slave-girl with their hands bound behind them: drag them along upon their faces, and so bring them before me. They replied, We hear and obey:—and went forth to repair to the house of 'Ali Nur-ed-Din. But there was in the court

of the Sultan a chamberlain named 'Alam-ed-Din Senjer, who had been one of the memluks of El-Fadl the son of Khakan, the father of 'Ali Nur-ed-Din; and when he heard the order of the Sultan, and saw the enemies prepared to slay his master's son, it was insupportable to him; so he mounted his horse, and proceeded to the house of 'Ali Nur-ed-Din, and knocked at the door. Nur-ed-Din came forth to him, and, when he saw him, knew him, and would have saluted him; but he said, O my master, this is not a time for salutation, nor for talking. Nur-ed-Din said, O 'Alam-ed-Din, what is the news? He replied, Save thyself by flight, thou and the slave-girl; for El-Mo'in the son of Sawi hath set up a snare for you, and if ye fall into his hands he will slay you: the Sultan hath sent to you forty swordsmen, and it is my advice that ye fly before the evil fall upon you. Then Senjer stretched forth his hand to Nur-ed-Din with some pieces of gold, and he counted them, and found them to be forty pieces; and he said, O my master, receive these, and if I had with me more, I would give it thee: but this is not a time for expostulating. And upon this, Nur-ed-Din went in to the damsel, and acquainted her with the occurrence, and she was confounded.

The two then went forth immediately from the city, and God let down the veil of his protection upon them, and they proceeded to the bank of the river, where they found a vessel ready to sail: the master was standing in the midst of it, and saying, He who hath anything to do, whether leave-taking or procuring provisions, or who hath forgotten aught, let him do what he desireth and return; for we are going. And they all replied, We have nothing remaining to do, O master. So, upon this, the master said to his crew, Quick! Loose the rope's end, and pull up the stake.—And 'Ali Nur-ed-Din exclaimed, Whither, O master? He answered, To the Abode of Peace, Baghdad. And Nur-ed-Din embarked, and the damsel with him, and they set the vessel afloat, and spread the sails, and it shot along like a bird with its pair of wings, carrying them forward with a favourable wind.

Meanwhile, the forty men whom the Sultan had sent came to the house of 'Ali Nur-ed-Din, and broke open the

doors and entered, and searched all the chambers, but without success: so they demolished the house, and returned, and acquainted the Sultan, who said, Search for them in every place where they may be:—and they replied, We hear and obey. The Wezir El-Mo'in the son of Sawi then descended to his house, after the Sultan had invested him with a robe of honour, and had said to him, None shall take vengeance for thee but myself. And he greeted the King with a prayer for long life, and his heart was set at ease: and the Sultan gave orders to proclaim throughout the city, O all ye people! our lord the Sultan hath commanded that whoever shall meet with 'Ali Nur-ed-Din, and bring him to the Sultan, shall be invested with a robe of honour, and he will give him a thousand pieces of gold; and he who shall conceal him, or know where he is, and not give information thereof, will merit the exemplary punishment that shall befall him! So all the people began to search for him; but could not trace him.—Such was the case with these people.

Now as to 'Ali Nur-ed-Din and his slave, they arrived in safety at Baghdad, and the master of the vessel said to them, This is Baghdad, and it is a city of security: winter with its cold hath departed from it, and the spring-quarter hath come with its roses, and its trees are in blossom, and its waters are flowing. And upon this, 'Ali Nur-ed-Din landed with his slave-girl, and gave the master five pieces of gold. They then walked a little way, and destiny cast them among the gardens, and they came to a place which they found swept and sprinkled, with long mastabahs, and pots suspended filled with water, and over it was a covering of trellis-work of canes extending along the whole length of a lane, at the upper end of which was the gate of a garden; but this was shut. And Nur-ed-Din said to the damsels, By Allah, this is a pleasant place!—and she replied, O my master, let us sit down a while upon one of these mastabahs. So they mounted and seated themselves there, and they washed their faces and hands, and enjoyed the current of the zephyr, and slept.—Glory be to Him who sleepeth not!

This garden was called the Garden of Delight, and in it was a palace called the Palace of Diversion, and it belonged

to the Khalifeh Harun Er-Rashid, who, when his heart was contracted, used to come to this garden, and enter the palace above mentioned, and there sit. The palace had eighty latticed windows, and eighty lamps were suspended in it, and in the midst of it was a great candlestick of gold ; and when the Khalifeh entered it, he commanded the female slaves to open the windows, and ordered Ishak the cup-companion to sing with them : so his heart became dilated, and his anxiety ceased. There was a superintendent to the garden, an old man, named the sheykh Ibrahim ; and it happened that he went forth once to transact some business, and found there persons diverting themselves with women of suspicious character, whereupon he was violently enraged, and having waited until the Khalifeh came thither some days after, he acquainted him with this occurrence, and the Khalifeh said, Whomsoever thou shalt find at the gate of the garden, do with him what thou wilt. Now on this day the sheykh Ibrahim went out to transact an affair of business, and found the two sleeping at the garden-gate, covered with a single izar ; and he said, Do not these two persons know that the Khalifeh hath given me permission to kill every one whom I find here ? But I will only give these two a slight beating, that no one may again approach the gate of the garden. He then cut a green palm-stick, and went forth to them, and raised his hand until the whiteness of his arm-pit appeared, and was about to beat them ; but he reflected in his mind, and said, O Ibrahim, how shouldst thou beat them when thou knowest not their case ? They may be two strangers, or of the children of the road,* whom destiny hath cast here. I will therefore uncover their faces, and look at them.—So he lifted up the izar from their faces, and said, These are two handsome persons, and it is not proper that I should beat them. And he covered their faces again, and, approaching the foot of 'Ali Nur-ed-Din, began to rub it gently ; whereupon Nur-ed-Din opened his eyes, and saw that he was an old man ; and he blushed, and drew in his feet, and, sitting up, took the hand of the sheykh Ibrahim and kissed it ; and the sheykh said to him, O my son, whence are ye ?—O my master, he answered, we are strangers,

* Wayfarers.

—And a tear gushed from his eye. The sheykh Ibrahim then said to him, O my son, know that the Prophet (God bless and save him !) hath enjoined generosity to the stranger. Wilt thou not arise, O my son, and enter the garden, and divert thyself in it, that thy heart may be dilated ?—O my master, said Nur-ed-Din, to whom doth this garden belong ? The sheykh answered, O my son, this garden I inherited from my family. And his design in saying this was only that they might feel themselves at ease, and enter the garden. And when Nur-ed-Din heard his words, he thanked him, and arose, together with his slave, and, the sheykh Ibrahim preceding them, they entered the garden.

The gate was arched, and over it were vines with grapes of different colours ; the red, like rubies ; and the black, like ebony. They entered a bower, and found within it fruits growing in clusters and singly, and the birds were warbling their various notes upon the branches : the nightingale was pouring forth its melodious sounds ; and the turtle-dove filled the place with its cooing ; and the black-bird, in its singing, resembled a human being ; and the ring-dove, a person exhilarated by wine. The fruits upon the trees, comprising every description that was good to eat, had ripened ; and there were two of each kind : there were the camphor-apricot, and the almond-apricot, and the apricot of Khurasan ; the plum of a colour like the complexion of beauties ; the cherry delighting the sense of every man ; the red, the white, and the green fig, of the most beautiful colours ; and flowers like pearls and coral ; the rose, whose redness put to shame the cheeks of the lovely ; the violet, like sulphur in contact with fire ; the myrtle, the gilliflower, the lavender, and the anemone ; and their leaves were bespangled with the tears of the clouds ; the chamomile smiled, displaying its teeth, and the narcissus looked at the rose with its negroes' eyes ; the citrons resembled round cups ; the limes were like bullets of gold ; the ground was carpeted with flowers of every colour, and the place beamed with the charms of spring ; the river murmured by while the birds sang, and the wind whistled among the trees ; the season was temperate, and the zephyr was languishing.

The sheykh Ibrahim conducted them into the elevated

saloon,⁷¹ and they were charmed with its beauty and the extraordinary elegances which it displayed, and seated themselves in one of the windows ; and Nur-ed-Din, reflecting upon his past entertainments, exclaimed, By Allah, this place is most delightful ! It hath reminded me of past events, and quenched in me an anguish like the fire of the ghada.—The sheykh Ibrahim then brought to them some food, and they ate to satisfaction, and washed their hands, and Nur-ed-Din, seating himself again in one of the windows, called to his slave, and she came to him ; and they sat gazing at the trees laden with all kinds of fruits ; after which, Nur-ed-Din looked towards the sheykh, and said to him, O sheykh Ibrahim, hast thou not any beverage ? For people drink after eating.—So the sheykh brought him some sweet and cold water : but Nur-ed-Din said, This is not the beverage I desire.—Dost thou want wine ? asked the sheykh.—Yes, answered Nur-ed-Din. The sheykh exclaimed, I seek refuge with Allah from it ! Verily, for thirteen years I have done nothing of that kind ; for the Prophet (God bless and save him !) cursed its drinker and its presser and its carrier.—Hear from me two words, said Nur-ed-Din. The sheykh replied, Say what thou wilt. So he said, If thou be neither the presser of the wine, nor its drinker, nor its carrier, will aught of the curse fall upon thee ? The sheykh answered, No.—Then take this piece of gold, rejoined Nur-ed-Din, and these two pieces of silver, and mount the ass, and halt at a distance from the place, and whatsoever man thou findest to buy it, call to him, and say to him, take these two pieces of silver, and with this piece of gold buy some wine, and place it upon the ass :—so, in this case, thou wilt be neither the carrier, nor the presser, nor the buyer ; and nothing will befall thee of that which befalleth the rest.

The sheykh Ibrahim, after laughing at his words, replied, By Allah, I have never seen one more witty than thou, nor heard speech more sweet. And Nur-ed-Din said to him, We have become dependant upon thee, and thou hast nothing to do but to comply with our wishes : bring us, therefore, all that we require.—O my son, said the sheykh, my buttery here is before thee (and it was the store-room furnished for the Prince of the Faithful) : enter it then, and

take from it what thou wilt; for it containeth more than thou desirest. So Nur-ed-Din entered the store-room, and beheld in it vessels of gold and silver and crystal, adorned with a variety of jewels; and he took out such of them as he desired, and poured the wine into the vessels of earthenware and bottles of glass; and he and the damsels began to drink, astonished at the beauty of the things which they beheld. The sheykh Ibrahim then brought to them sweet-scented flowers, and seated himself at a distance from them; and they continued drinking, in a state of the utmost delight, until the wine took effect upon them, and their cheeks reddened, and their eyes wantoned like those of the gazelle, and their hair hung down: whereupon the sheykh Ibrahim said, What aileth me that I am sitting at a distance from them? Why should I not sit by them? And when shall I be in the company of such as these two, who are like two moons?—He then advanced, and seated himself at the edge of the raised portion of the floor; and Nur-ed-Din said to him, O my master, by my life I conjure thee to approach and join us. So he went to them; and Nur-ed-Din filled a cup, and, looking at the sheykh, said to him, Drink, that thou mayest know how delicious is its flavour. But the sheykh Ibrahim exclaimed, I seek refuge with Allah! Verily, for thirteen years I have done nothing of that kind.—And Nur-ed-Din, feigning to pay no attention to him, drank the cup, and threw himself upon the ground, pretending that intoxication had overcome him.

Upon this, Enis-el-Jelis looked towards the sheykh, and said to him, O sheykh Ibrahim, see how this man hath treated me.—O my mistress, said he, what aileth him? She rejoined, Always doth he treat me thus: he drinketh a while, and then sleepeth, and I remain alone, and find no one to keep me company over my cup. If I drink, who will serve me? And if I sing, who will hear me?—The sheykh, moved with tenderness and affection for her by her words, replied, It is not proper that a cup-companion be thus. The damsels then filled a cup, and, looking at the sheykh Ibrahim, said to him, I conjure thee by my life that thou take it and drink it; reject it not, but accept it, and refresh my heart. So he stretched forth his hand, and

took the cup, and drank it; and she filled for him a second time, and handed it to him, saying, O my master, this remaineth for thee. He replied, By Allah, I cannot drink it: that which I have drunk is enough for me. But she said, By Allah, it is indispensable:—and he took the cup, and drank it. She then gave him the third; and he took it, and was about to drink it, when, lo, Nur-ed-Din raised himself, and said to him, O sheykh Ibrahim, what is this? Did I not conjure thee a while ago, and thou refusedst, and saidst, Verily, for thirteen years I have not done it?—The sheykh Ibrahim, touched with shame, replied, By Allah, I am not in fault; for she pressed me. And Nur-ed-Din laughed, and they resumed their carousal, and the damsel, turning her eyes towards her master, said to him, O my master, drink thou, and do not urge the sheykh Ibrahim; that I may divert thee with the sight of him. So she began to fill and to hand to her master, and her master filled and gave to her, and thus they continued to do, time after time; till at length the sheykh Ibrahim looked towards them and said, What meaneth this? And what sort of carousal is this? Wherefore do ye not give me to drink, since I have become your cup-companion?—At this they both laughed until they became almost senseless; and then drank, and gave him to drink; and they continued thus until the expiration of a third of the night, when the damsel said, O sheykh Ibrahim, with thy permission shall I rise and light one of the candles which are arranged here?—Rise, he answered; but light not more than one candle. But she sprang upon her feet, and, beginning with the first candle, proceeded until she had lighted eighty. She then sat down again; and presently Nur-ed-Din said, O sheykh Ibrahim, in what favour am I held with thee? Wilt thou not allow me to light one of these lamps?—The sheykh answered, Arise, and light one lamp, and be not thou also troublesome. So he arose, and, beginning with the first lamp, lighted all the eighty; and the saloon seemed to dance. And after this, the sheykh Ibrahim, overcome by intoxication, said to them, Ye are more frolicsome than I:—and he sprang upon his feet, and opened all the windows, and sat down again with them; and they continued carousing

and reciting verses; and the place rang with their merriment.

Now God, the All-seeing and All-knowing, who hath appointed a cause to every event, had decreed that the Khalifeh should be sitting that night at one of the windows looking towards the Tigris, by moonlight; and he looked in that direction, and saw the light of lamps and candles reflected in the river, and, turning his eyes up towards the palace in the garden, he beheld it beaming with those candles and lamps, and exclaimed, Bring hither to me Ja'far El-Barmeki! In the twinkling of an eye, Ja'far stood before the Prince of the Faithful; and the Khalifeh said to him, O dog of Wezirs, dost thou serve me and not acquaint me with what happeneth in the city of Baghdad?—What, asked Ja'far, is the occasion of these words? The Khalifeh answered, If the city of Baghdad were not taken from me, the Palace of Diversion were not enlivened with the light of the lamps and candles, and its windows were not opened. Wo to thee! Who could do these things unless the office of Khalifeh were taken from me?—Who, said Ja'far (the muscles of his side quivering from fear), informed thee that the lamps and candles were lighted in the Palace of Diversion, and that its windows were opened? The Khalifeh replied, Advance hither to me, and look. So Ja'far approached the Khalifeh, and, looking towards the garden, beheld the palace as it were a flame of fire, its light surpassing that of the moon. He desired, therefore, to make an excuse for the sheykh Ibrahim, the superintendent, thinking, from what he beheld, that the event might have occurred through his permission: and accordingly he said, O Prince of the Faithful, the sheykh Ibrahim last week said to me, O my master Ja'far, I am desirous of entertaining my children during my life and the life of the Prince of the Faithful.—And what, said I, is thy design in saying this? He answered, It is my wish that thou wouldest obtain for me permission from the Khalifeh that I may celebrate the circumcision of my sons in the palace. So I said, Do what thou wilt with respect to the entertainment of thy sons, and, if God will, I shall have an interview with the Khalifeh, and will acquaint him with it. And he left me thus; and I

forgot to acquaint thee.—O Ja'far, said the Khalifeh, thou wast guilty of one offence against me, and then thine offence became two: for thou hast erred in two points: the first, thy not acquainting me with this affair; and the second, thy not accomplishing the desire of the sheykh Ibrahim; for he did not come to thee and address thee with these words but to hint a request for some money by the aid of which to effect his design, and thou neither gavest him anything nor acquaintedst me that I might give him.—O Prince of the Faithful, replied Ja'far, I forgot.

The Khalifeh then said, By my forefathers, I will not pass the remainder of my night but with him, for he is a just man, who frequenteth the sheykhs, and attendeth to the poor, and favoureth the indigent; and I imagine all his acquaintances are with him this night: so I must repair to him: perhaps one of them may offer up for us a prayer productive of good to us in this world and the next; and probably some advantage may accrue to him from my presence, and he will receive pleasure from this, together with his friends.—O Prince of the Faithful, replied Ja'far, the greater part of the night hath passed, and they are now about to disperse. But the Khalifeh said, We must go to them. And Ja'far was silent, and was perplexed in his mind, not knowing what to do. So the Khalifeh rose upon his feet, and Ja'far rose and preceded him, and Mesrur the eunuch went with them. The three walked on reflecting, and, departing from the palace, proceeded through the streets, in the attire of merchants, until they arrived at the gate of the garden above mentioned; and the Khalifeh, approaching it, found it open; and he was surprised, and said, See, O Ja'far, how the sheykh Ibrahim hath left the gate open until this hour, which is not his usual custom. They then entered, and came to the end of the garden, where they stopped beneath the palace; and the Khalifeh said, O Ja'far, I desire to take a view of them secretly before I go up to them, that I may see how the sheykhs are occupied in the dispensing of their blessings and the employment of their miraculous powers; for they have qualities which distinguish them both in their private retirements and in their public exercises; and now we hear

not their voices, nor discover any indication of their presence. Having thus said, he looked around, and, seeing a tall walnut-tree, he said, O Ja'far, I would climb this tree (for its branches are near to the windows) and look at them. And accordingly he ascended the tree, and climbed from branch to branch until he came to that which was opposite to one of the windows, and there he sat, and, looking in through this window of the palace, beheld a damsel and a young man, like two moons (extolled be the perfection of Him who created them !); and he saw the sheykh Ibrahim sitting with a cup in his hand, and saying, O mistress of beauties, drinking unaccompanied by merry sounds is not pleasant. Hast thou not heard the saying of the poet?—

Circulate it in the large cup, and in the small ; and receive it from the hand of the shining moon : *

And drink not without merry sounds ; for I have observed that horses drink to the sound of whistling.

When the Khalifeh witnessed this conduct of the sheykh Ibrahim, the vein of anger swelled between his eyes, and he descended, and said, O Ja'far, I have never seen anything of the miraculous performances of the just such as I have beheld this night: ascend, therefore, thyself also, into this tree, and look, lest the blessings of the just escape thee.— On hearing the words of the Prince of the Faithful, Ja'far was perplexed at his situation ; and he climbed up into the tree, and looked, and saw Nur-ed-Din and the sheykh Ibrahim and the damsel, and the sheykh Ibrahim had the cup in his hand. As soon as he beheld this, he made sure of destruction ; and he descended, and stood before the Prince of the Faithful, and the Khalifeh said, O Ja'far, praise be to God who hath made us to be of the number of those who follow the external ordinances of the holy law, and averted from us the sin of disguising ourselves by the practice of hypocrisy ! But Ja'far was unable to reply, from his excessive confusion. The Khalifeh then looked towards him, and said, Who can have brought these persons hither, and admitted them into my palace ? But the like of this young

* The cupbearer.

man and this damsel, in beauty and loveliness and symmetry of form, mine eye hath never beheld.—Ja'far, now conceiving a hope that the Khalifeh might be propitiated, replied, Thou hast spoken truly, O Prince of the Faithful. And the Khalifeh said, O Ja'far, climb up with us upon this branch which is opposite them, that we may amuse ourselves by observing them. So they both climbed up into the tree, and, looking at them, heard the sheykh Ibrahim say, O my mistress, I have relinquished decorum by the drinking of wine; but the pleasure of this is not complete without the melodious sounds of stringed instruments.—O sheykh Ibrahim, replied Enis-el-Jelis, by Allah, if we had any musical instrument, our happiness were perfect. And when the sheykh Ibrahim heard her words, he rose upon his feet.—The Khalifeh said to Ja'far, What may he be going to do? Ja'far replied, I know not.—And the sheykh Ibrahim went away, and returned with a lute; and the Khalifeh, looking attentively at it, saw that it was the lute of Ishak the cup-companion; and said, By Allah, if this damsel sing not well, I will crucify you all; but if she sing well, I will pardon them, and crucify thee. So Ja'far said, O Allah, let her not sing well!—Why? asked the Khalifeh.—That thou mayest crucify all of us, answered Ja'far; and then we shall cheer one another by conversation. And the Khalifeh laughed: and the damsel took the lute, and tuned its strings, and played upon it in a manner that would melt iron, and inspire an idiot with intellect; after which she sang with such sweetness that the Khalifeh exclaimed, O Ja'far, never in my life have I heard so enchanting a voice as this!—Perhaps, said Ja'far, the anger of the Khalifeh hath departed from him?—Yea, he answered; it hath departed. He then descended with Ja'far from the tree, and, looking towards him, said, I am desirous of going up to them, to sit with them, and to hear the damsel sing before me.—O Prince of the Faithful, replied Ja'far, if thou go up to them, probably they will be troubled by thy presence; and as to the sheykh Ibrahim, he will assuredly die of fear. The Khalifeh therefore said, O Ja'far, thou must acquaint me with some stratagem by means of which I may learn the truth of the affair without their knowing that I have discovered them. And he and

Ja'far walked towards the Tigris, reflecting upon this matter ; and lo, a fisherman stood beneath the windows of the palace, and he threw his net, hoping to catch something by means of which to obtain his subsistence.—Now the Khalifeh had, on a former occasion, called to the sheykh Ibrahim, and said to him, What was that noise that I heard beneath the windows of the palace ?—and he answered, The voices of the fishermen, who are fishing :—so he said, Go down and forbid them from coming to this place. They were therefore forbidden to come thither ; but this night there came a fisherman named Kerim, and, seeing the garden-gate open, he said within himself, This is a time of inadvertence, and perhaps I may catch some fish on this occasion :—so he took his net, and threw it into the river, and then recited some verses, contrasting the condition of the poor fisherman, toiling throughout the night, with that of the lord of the palace, who, awaking from a pleasant slumber, findeth the fawn in his possession ; and as soon as he had finished his recitation, lo, the Khalifeh, unattended, stood at his head. The Khalifeh knew him, and exclaimed, O Kerim !—and the fisherman, hearing him call him by his name, turned towards him ; and when he beheld the Khalifeh, the muscles of his side quivered, and he said, By Allah, O Prince of the Faithful, I did not this in mockery of the mandate ; but poverty and the wants of my family impelled me to the act of which thou art witness. The Khalifeh replied, Throw thy net for my luck. And the fisherman advanced, rejoicing exceedingly, and cast the net, and, having waited until it had attained its limit and become steady at the bottom, drew it in again, and there came up in it a variety of fish that could not be numbered.

The Khalifeh was delighted at this, and said, O Kerim, strip off thy clothes :—and he did so. He was clad in a jubbeh * in which were a hundred patches of coarse woollen stuff, containing vermin of the most abominable kind, and among them fleas in such numbers that he might almost have been transported by their means over the face of the earth ; and he took from his head a turban which for three years he had never unwound ; but when he happened to

* A long outer coat with sleeves nearly reaching to the wrist.

find a piece of rag he twisted it around it: and when he had taken off the jubbeh and turban, the Khalifeh pulled off from his own person two vests of silk of Alexandria and Ba'lbekk, and a melwatah* and a farajiyeh, and said to the fisherman, Take these, and put them on. The Khalifeh then put on himself the fisherman's jubbeh and turban, and, having drawn a litham † over his face, said to the fisherman, Go about thy business;—and he kissed the feet of the Khalifeh, and thanked him, reciting these two verses:—

Thou hast granted me favours beyond my power to acknowledge,
and completely satisfied all my wants.

I will thank thee, therefore, as long as I live; and when I die, my
bones will thank thee in their grave.

But scarcely had he finished his verses, when the vermin overran the person of the Khalifeh, and he began to seize them with his right hand and his left from his neck, and to throw them down; and he exclaimed, O fisherman, wo to thee! What are these abundant vermin in this jubbeh?—O my lord, he answered, at present they torment thee; but when a week shall have passed over thee, thou wilt not feel them, nor think of them. The Khalifeh laughed, and said to him, How can I suffer this jubbeh to remain upon me? The fisherman replied, I wish to tell thee something; but I am ashamed, through my awe of the Khalifeh.—Impart, said the Khalifeh, what thou hast to tell me: So he said to him, It hath occurred to my mind, O Prince of the Faithful, that thou desirest to learn the art of fishing, in order that thou mayest be master of a trade that may profit thee; and if such be thy desire, this jubbeh is suitable to thee. And the Khalifeh laughed at his words.

The fisherman then went his way, and the Khalifeh took the basket of fish, and, having put upon it a little grass, went with it to Ja'far, and stood before him; and Ja'far, thinking that he was Kerim the fisherman, feared for him, and said, O Kerim, what brought thee hither? Save thyself by flight; for the Khalifeh is here this night.—And when the Khalifeh heard the words of Ja'far, he laughed until he

* A jubbeh or dress of costly material.

† [The Bedawi muffler, made by the end of the head-kerchief.]

fell down upon his back. So Ja'far said, Perhaps thou art our lord the Prince of the Faithful?—Yes, O Ja'far, answered the Khalifeh, and thou art my Wezir, and I came with thee hither, and thou knowest me not. How then should the sheykh Ibrahim know me when he is drunk? Remain where thou art until I return to thee.—Ja'far replied, I hear and obey:—and the Khalifeh advanced to the door of the palace, and knocked. The sheykh Ibrahim arose, therefore, and said, Who is at the door? He answered, I, O sheykh Ibrahim. The sheykh said, Who art thou?—and the Khalifeh answered, I am Kerim the fisherman: I heard that there were guests with thee, and have therefore brought thee some fish; for it is excellent.—Now Nur-ed-Din and the damsel were both fond of fish, and when they heard the mention of it they rejoiced exceedingly, and said, O my master, open to him, and let him come in to us with the fish which he hath brought. So the sheykh Ibrahim opened the door, and the Khalifeh, in his fisherman's disguise, entered, and began by salutation; and the sheykh Ibrahim said to him, Welcome to the robber, the thief, the gambler! Come hither, and shew us the fish which thou hast brought.—He therefore shewed it to them; and lo, it was alive, and moving; and the damsel exclaimed, By Allah, O my master, this fish is excellent! I wish it were fried!—By Allah, said the sheykh Ibrahim, thou hast spoken truth. Then, addressing the Khalifeh, he said, O fisherman, I wish thou hadst brought this fish fried. Arise, and fry it for us, and bring it.—On the head be thy commands, replied the Khalifeh: I will fry it, and bring it.—Be quick, said they, in doing it.

The Khalifeh therefore arose and ran back to Ja'far, and said, O Ja'far, they want the fish fried.—O Prince of the Faithful, replied he, give it me, and I will fry it. But the Khalifeh said, By the tombs of my ancestors, none shall fry it but myself: with my own hand will I do it! He then repaired to the hut of the superintendent, and, searching there, found in it everything that he required, the frying-pan, and even the salt, and wild marjoram, and other things. So he approached the fire-place, and put on the frying-pan, and fried it nicely; and when it was done, he put it upon a banana-leaf, and, having taken from the garden some limes,

he went up with the fish, and placed it before them. The young man, therefore, and the damsel and the sheykh Ibrahim advanced and ate ; and when they had finished, they washed their hands, and Nur-ed-Din said, By Allah, O fisherman, thou hast done us a kindness this night. Then putting his hand into his pocket, he took forth for him three pieces of gold, of those which Senjer had presented to him when he was setting forth on his journey, and said, O fisherman, excuse me ; for, by Allah, if I had known thee before the events that have lately happened to me, I would have extracted the bitterness of poverty from thy heart : but take this as accordant with my present circumstances. So saying, he threw the pieces of gold to the Khalifeh, who took them, and kissed them, and put them in his pocket. The object of the Khalifeh in doing this was only that he might hear the damsel sing : so he said to him, Thou hast treated me with beneficence, and abundantly recompensed me ; but I beg of thy unbounded indulgence that this damsel may sing an air, that I may hear her. Nur-ed-Din therefore said, O Enis-el-Jelis ! She replied, Yes.—By my life, said he, sing to us something for the gratification of this fisherman ; for he desireth to hear thee. And when she had heard what her master said, she took the lute, and tried it with her fingers, after she had twisted its pegs, and sang to it these two verses :—

The fingers of many a fawn-like damsel have played upon the lute,
and the soul hath been ravished by the touch.

She hath made the deaf to hear her songs ; and the dumb hath
exclaimed, Thou hast excelled in thy singing !

Then she played again, in an extraordinary manner, so as to charm the minds of her hearers, and sang the following couplet :—

We are honoured by your visiting our abode, and your splendour
hath dispelled the darkness of the moonless night :

It is therefore incumbent upon me to perfume my dwelling with
musk and rosewater and camphor.

Upon this, the Khalifeh was affected with violent emotion, and overcome by ecstasy, so that he was no longer master of himself from excessive delight ; and he began to exclaim,

Allah approve thee ! Allah approve thee ! Allah approve thee ! So Nur-ed-Din said to him, O fisherman, have the damsel and her art in striking the chords pleased thee?—Yea, by Allah ! exclaimed the Khalifeh. And Nur-ed-Din immediately said, She is bestowed upon thee as a present from me, the present of a generous man who will not revoke his gift. And he rose upon his feet, and took a melwatah, and threw it upon the Khalifeh in the fisherman's disguise, ordering him to depart with the damsel. But she looked towards him, and said, O my master, wilt thou part from me without bidding me farewell? If we must be separated, pause while I take leave of thee.—And she recited the following couplet:—

If you depart from me, still your abode will be in my heart, in the recess of my bosom.

I implore the Compassionate to grant our reunion ; and a boon such as this, God will grant to whom He pleaseth.

And when she had finished, Nur-ed-Din thus replied to her:—

She bade me farewell on the day of separation, saying, while she wept from the pain that it occasioned,
What wilt thou do after my departure?—Say this, I replied, unto him who will survive it.

The Khalifeh, when he heard this, was distressed at the thought of separating them, and, looking towards the young man, he said to him, O my master, art thou in fear on account of any crime, or art thou in debt to any one? Nur-ed-Din answered, By Allah, O fisherman, a wonderful event, and an extraordinary adventure, happened to me and this damsel: if it were engraved on the understanding, it would be a lesson to him who would be admonished.—Wilt thou not, rejoined the Khalifeh, relate to us thy story, and acquaint us with thy case? Perhaps thy doing so may be productive of relief; for the relief of God is near.—So Nur-ed-Din said, Wilt thou hear our story in poetry or in prose?—Prose, answered the Khalifeh, is mere talk ; and verse, words put together like pearls. And Nur-ed-Din hung down his head towards the ground, and then related his story in a series of verses: but when he had finished,

the Khalifeh begged him to explain his case more fully. He therefore acquainted him with the whole of his circumstances from beginning to end ; and when the Khalifeh understood the affair, he said to him, Whither wouldst thou now repair ? He answered, God's earth is wide. The Khalifeh then said to him, I will write for thee a letter which thou shalt convey to the Sultan Mohammad the son of Suleyman Ez-Zeyni, and when he shall have read it, he will do thee no injury.—Is there in the world, said Nur-ed-Din, a fisherman who correspondeth with Kings ? Verily this is a thing that can never be.—Thou hast spoken truly, rejoined the Khalifeh ; but I will acquaint thee with the cause. Know that I read in the same school with him, under a master, and I was his monitor ; and after that, prosperity was his lot, and he became a Sultan, while God made me to be a fisherman : yet I have never sent to request anything of him, but he hath performed my wish ; and if I sent to him every day to request a thousand things of him, he would do what I asked. When Nur-ed-Din, therefore, heard his words, he said to him, Write, that I may see. And he took an inkhorn and a pen, and wrote (after the phrase, In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful).—To proceed.—This letter is from Harun Er-Rashid the son of El-Mahdi, to his highness Mohammad the son of Suleyman Ez-Zeyni, who hath been encompassed by my beneficence, and whom I constituted my viceroy of a portion of my dominions. I acquaint thee that the bearer of this letter is Nur-ed-Din the son of El-Fadl the son of Khakan the Wezir, and on his arrival in thy presence thou shalt divest thyself of the regal authority, and seat him in thy place ; for I have appointed him to the office to which I formerly appointed thee : so disobey not my commands : and peace be on thee.—He then gave the letter to 'Ali Nur-ed-Din, who took it and kissed it and put it in his turban, and immediately set forth on his journey.

The sheykh Ibrahim now looked towards the Khalifeh in his fisherman's disguise, and said to him, O most contemptible of fishermen, thou hast brought us two fish worth twenty half-dirhems, and received three pieces of gold, and desirest to take the slave also. But when the Khalifeh

heard these words, he cried out at him, and made a sign to Mesrur, who immediately discovered himself, and rushed in upon him. Ja'far, meanwhile, had sent one of the attendants of the garden to the porter of the palace to demand a suit of clothing of him for the Prince of the Faithful; and the man went, and brought the dress, and kissed the ground before the Khalifeh, who took off and gave to him that with which he was then clad, and put on this suit. The sheykh Ibrahim was sitting on a chair: the Khalifeh paused to see the result: and the sheykh was astounded, and began to bite the ends of his fingers through his confusion, saying, Am I asleep or awake? The Khalifeh then looked at him, and said, O sheykh Ibrahim, what is this predicament in which thou art placed? And upon this, the sheykh recovered from his intoxication, and, throwing himself upon the ground, implored forgiveness: and the Khalifeh pardoned him; after which he gave orders that the damsel should be conveyed to the palace where he resided; and when she had arrived there, he appropriated to her a separate lodging, and appointed persons to wait upon her, and said to her, Know that I have sent thy master as Sultan of El-Basrah, and, if God please, I will despatch to him a dress of honour, and send thee also to him with it.

As to Nur-ed-Din, he continued his journey until he entered El-Basrah, and went up to the palace of the Sultan, when he uttered a loud cry, whereupon the Sultan desired him to approach; and when he came into the presence of the King, he kissed the ground before him, and produced the letter, and handed it to him. And as soon as the Sultan saw the superscription in the handwriting of the Prince of the Faithful, he rose upon his feet, and, having kissed it three times, said, I hear and pay obedience to God (whose name be exalted!) and to the Prince of the Faithful. He then summoned before him the four Kadis,* and the Emirs, and was about to divest himself of the regal office: but, lo, the Wezir El-Mo'in the son of Sawi was before him, and the Sultan gave him the letter of the Prince of the Faithful, and when he saw it, he rent it in pieces, and put it into his mouth, and chewed it, and threw it down.

* Of the four orthodox sects.

The Sultan, enraged, cried, Wo to thee ! What hath induced thee to act thus ?—He answered, This man hath had no interview with the Khalifeh nor with his Wezir ; but is a young wretch, an artful devil, who, having met with a paper containing the handwriting of the Khalifeh, hath counterfeited it, and written what he desired : wherefore then shouldst thou abdicate the sovereignty, when the Khalifeh hath not sent to thee an envoy with a royal autographical mandate ; for if this affair were true, he had sent with him a Chamberlain or a Wezir ; but he came alone.—What then is to be done ? said the Sultan. The Wezir answered, Send away this young man with me, and I will take charge of him, and despatch him in company with a Chamberlain to the city of Baghdad ; and if his words be true, he will bring us a royal autographical mandate and diploma of investiture ; and if not true, they will send him back to us with the Chamberlain, and I will take my revenge upon my offender.

When the Sultan heard what the Wezir said, it pleased him ; and the Wezir took him away,⁷² and cried out to the pages, who threw down Nur-ed-Din, and beat him until he became insensible. He then ordered to put a chain upon his feet, and called to the jailer ; and when he came, he kissed the ground before him. This jailer was named Kuteyt ; and the Wezir said to him, O Kuteyt, I desire that thou take this person, and cast him into one of the subterranean cells which are in thy prison, and torture him night and day. The jailer replied, I hear and obey :—and he put Nur-ed-Din into the prison, and locked the door upon him ; but after having done this, he gave orders to sweep a mastabah within the door, and furnished it with a prayer-carpet and a pillow, and seated Nur-ed-Din upon it, and loosed his chain, and treated him with kindness. The Wezir every day sent to him, commanding him to beat him ; and the jailer pretended that he tortured him, while, on the contrary, he treated him with benignity.

Thus he continued to do for forty days ; and on the forty-first day, there came a present from the Khalifeh, and when the Sultan saw it, it pleased him, and he conferred with the Wezirs upon the subject ; but one said, Perhaps this present was designed for the new Sultan. Upon this,

the Wezir El-Mo'in the son of Sawi remarked, It were proper to have slain him on his arrival :—and the Sultan exclaimed, Now thou hast reminded me of him, go down and bring him, and I will strike off his head. The Wezir replied, I hear and obey :—and arose, saying, I desire to proclaim throughout the city, He who wisheth to witness the decapitation of Nur-ed-Din 'Ali the son of El-Fadl the son of Khakan, let him come to the palace :—so that all the people may come to behold it, and I may gratify my heart, and mortify my enviers. The Sultan said, Do what thou wilt. So the Wezir descended, full of joy and happiness, and went to the Wali, and ordered him to make this proclamation ; and when the people heard the crier, they all grieved and wept, even the boys in the schools, and the tradesmen in their shops ; and numbers of the people strove together to take for themselves places where they might behold the spectacle, while others repaired to the prison, to accompany him thence. The Wezir then went forth, attended by ten memluks, to the prison : and Kuteyt the jailer said to him, What dost thou desire, O our lord the Wezir ?—Bring forth to me, said the Wezir, this young wretch. The jailer replied, He is in a most miserable state from the excessive beating that I have inflicted upon him. And he entered, and found him reciting some verses, commencing thus :—

Who is there to aid me in my affliction ? For my pain hath become intense, and my remedy is scarce procurable !

And the jailer pulled off from him his clean clothes, and, having clad him in two dirty garments, brought him out to the Wezir. Nur-ed-Din then looked at him, and saw that he was his enemy who had incessantly desired his destruction ; and when he beheld him, he wept, and said to him, Art thou secure from misfortune ? Hast thou not heard the saying of the poet ?—

They made use of their power, and used it tyrannically ; and soon it became as though it never had existed.

O Wezir, know that God (whose perfection be extolled, and whose name be exalted !) is the doer of whatsoever He

willeth.—O 'Ali, replied the Wezir, wouldest thou frighten me by these words? I am now going to strike off thy head, in spite of the people of El-Basrah; and I will pay no regard to thy counsel; but I will rather attend to the saying of the poet:—

Let fortune do whatever it willeth, and bear with cheerful mind the effects of fate.

How excellent also is the saying of another poet:—

He who liveth after his enemy a single day, hath attained his desire.

The Wezir then ordered his pages to convey him on the back of a mule; whereupon they said to him (being distressed to obey), Suffer us to stone him and cut him in pieces, though our lives should be sacrificed in consequence. But he replied, Never do it. Have ye not heard what the poet hath said:—

A decreed term is my inevitable lot; and as soon as its days have expired, I die.

If the lions dragged me into their forest, they could not close it while aught of it remained.

So they proceeded to proclaim before Nur-ed-Din, This is the smallest recompence of him who forgeth a letter from the Khalifeh to the Sultan. And they continued to parade him throughout El-Basrah until they stationed him beneath the window of the palace, and in the place of blood, when the executioner approached him, and said to him, I am a slave under command; and if thou hast any want, acquaint me with it, that I may perform it for thee; for there remaineth not of thy life any more than the period until the Sultan shall put forth his face from the window. And upon this, Nur-ed-Din looked to the right and left, and recited these verses:—

Is there among you a merciful friend, who will aid me? I conjure you by Allah to answer me!

My life hath passed, and my death is at hand! Is there any who will pity me, to obtain my recompence, And consider my state, and relieve my anguish, by a draught of water that my torment may be lightened?

And the people were excited to tears for him; and the executioner took some water to hand it to him; but the Wezir arose from his place, and struck the kulleh* of water with his hand, and broke it, and called to the executioner, commanding him to strike off his head; whereupon he bound Nur-ed-Din's eyes. The people, however, called out against the Wezir, and raised a tumultuous cry against him, and many words passed between them; and while they were in this state, lo, a dust rose, and filled the sky and the open tracts; and when the Sultan beheld it, as he sat in the palace, he said to his attendants, See what is the news. The Wezir said, After thou shalt first have beheaded this man. But the Sultan replied, Wait thou until we see what is the news.

Now this dust was the dust of Ja'far, the Wezir of the Khalifeh, and of his attendants; and the cause of their coming was this:—The Khalifeh had passed thirty days without remembering the affair of 'Ali the son of El-Fadl the son of Khakan, and no one mentioned it to him, until he came one night to the private apartment of Enis-el-Jelis, and heard her lamenting, as she recited, with a soft voice, the saying of the poet:—

Thine image [is before me] whether distant or near, and my tongue never ceaseth to mention thee.

Her lamentation increased, and lo, the Khalifeh opened the door, and entered the chamber, and saw Enis-el-Jelis weeping. On beholding the Khalifeh, she fell at his feet, and, having kissed them three times, recited these two verses:—

O thou of pure origin, and of excellent birth; of ripe-fruitful branch, and of unsullied race!

I remind thee of the promise thy beneficence granted, and far be it from thee that thou shouldst forget it.

The Khalifeh said to her, Who art thou? She answered, I am the present given to thee by 'Ali the son of El-Fadl the son of Khakan; and I request the fulfilment of the promise which thou gavest me, that thou wouldest send me to him with the honorary gift; for I have now been here thirty

* A small porous earthen bottle with a wide mouth.

days, and have not tasted sleep. And upon this, the Khalifeh summoned Ja'far El-Barmeki, and said to him, For thirty days I have heard no news of 'Ali the son of El-Fadl the son of Khakan, and I imagine nothing less than that the Sultan hath killed him: but, by my head! by the tombs of my ancestors! if any evil event have happened to him, I will destroy him who hath been the cause of it, though he be the dearest of men in my estimation! I desire, therefore, that thou journey immediately to El-Basrah, and bring me an account of the conduct of the King Mohammad the son of Suleyman Ez-Zeyni to 'Ali the son of El-Fadl the son of Khakan.

So Ja'far obeyed his commands, and set forth on his journey, and when he approached, and saw this tumult and crowd, he said, What is the occasion of this crowd? They related to him, therefore, the situation in which they were with regard to Nur-ed-Din; and when he heard their words, he hastened to go up to the Sultan, and, having saluted him, acquainted him with the cause of his coming, and told him, that if any evil event had happened to 'Ali Nur-ed-Din, the Khalifeh would destroy him who was the cause of it. He then arrested the Sultan, and the Wezir El-Mo'in the son of Sawi, and gave orders to liberate 'Ali Nur-ed-Din, and enthroned him as Sultan in the place of the Sultan Mohammad the son of Suleyman Ez-Zeyni; after which he remained in El-Basrah three days, the usual period of entertainment; and on the morning of the fourth day, 'Ali Nur-ed-Din said to Ja'far, I have a longing desire to see the Prince of the Faithful. So Ja'far said to the King Mohammad the son of Suleyman, Prepare thyself for travelling; for we will perform the morning-prayers, and depart to Baghdad. He replied, I hear and obey:—and they performed the morning-prayers, and mounted all together, with the Wezir El-Mo'in the son of Sawi, who now repented of what he had done. As to 'Ali Nur-ed-Din, he rode by the side of Ja'far: and they continued their journey until they arrived at Baghdad, the Abode of Peace.

They then presented themselves before the Khalifeh, and related to him the case of Nur-ed-Din; whereupon the Khalifeh addressed him, saying, Take this sword, and strike

off with it the head of thine enemy. And he took it, and approached El-Mo'in the son of Sawi; but he looked at him, and said to him, I did according to my nature, and do thou according to thine. And Nur-ed-Din threw down the sword from his hand, and, looking towards the Khalifeh, said, O Prince of the Faithful, he hath beguiled me. So the Khalifeh said, Do thou leave him:—and he said to Mesrur, O Mesrur, advance thou, and strike off his head. Mesrur, therefore, did so: and upon this, the Khalifeh said to 'Ali the son of El-Fadl the son of Khakan, Request of me what thou wilt. He replied, O my lord, I have no want of the sovereignty of El-Basrah, and desire nothing but to have the honour of serving thee.—Most willingly I assent, said the Khalifeh:—and he summoned the damsels, and when she had come before him, he bestowed favours upon them both: he gave to them one of the palaces of Baghdad, and assigned to them regular allowances, and made Nur-ed-Din one of his companions at the table; and he remained with him until death overtook him.

CHAPTER VII

[NIGHTS 36—44]

THE STORY OF GHANIM THE SON OF EYYUB, THE DISTRACTED SLAVE OF LOVE

It hath been told me, O happy King, said Shahrazad, that there was, in ancient times, a certain merchant of Damascus,⁷³ possessed of wealth, who had a son like the moon at the full, of eloquent tongue, called Ghanim the son of Eyyub, the Distracted Slave of Love ; and this son had a sister, named Fitneh [temptation], on account of her excessive beauty and loveliness. Their father died, leaving them large property, among which were a hundred loads of silk and brocade, and bags of musk, and upon these loads was written, This is intended for Baghdad :—it having been his desire to journey to that city.

So, when God (whose name be exalted !) had taken his soul, and some time had elapsed, his son took these loads, and journeyed with them to Baghdad.—This was in the time of Harun Er-Rashid.—He took leave of his mother and relations and townspeople before his departure, and went forth, placing his dependence upon God (whose name be exalted !), and God decreed him safety, so that he arrived at Baghdad, whither there travelled in his company a party of merchants. He hired for himself a handsome house, and furnished it with carpets and cushions, and suspended curtains in it ; and there he deposited those loads, together with the mules and camels, and remained until he had rested himself ; and the merchants of Baghdad, and its great men, came and saluted him. He then took a wrapper containing ten pieces of costly stuff, with the prices written upon them, and went forth with them to the market of the merchants,

who met him and saluted him, treated him with honour and welcomed him, and seated him at the shop of the Sheykh of the market ; and he sold the pieces, gaining, for every piece of gold, two. So Ghanim rejoiced ; and he proceeded to sell the stuffs by little and little, and continued to do so for a whole year.

After this, on the first day of the following year, he came to the same market, but found its gate shut, and, inquiring the cause of this, he was answered, One of the merchants hath died, and all the rest of them have gone to walk in his funeral-procession. Wilt thou then, added his informant, gain a recompense by walking with them ?—He replied, Yes ;—and he asked respecting the place of the funeral. So they guided him thither ; and he performed the ablution, and walked with the other merchants until they arrived at the place of prayer, where they prayed over the dead. The merchants then walked all together before the corpse to the burial-ground, Ghanim following them, until the procession arrived at the burial-ground outside the city, and they proceeded among the tombs until they came to that in which the corpse was to be deposited. They found that the family of the deceased had pitched a tent over the tomb, and placed there the candles and lamps ; and they buried the dead, and the readers sat reciting the Kur'an at the tomb. The merchants sat with them ; and so also did Ghanim the son of Eyyub ; but he was overcome by bashfulness, saying within himself, I cannot quit them until I have departed with them. They sat listening to the recitation of the Kur'an until the period of nightfall, when the servants placed before them the supper and sweetmeats, and they ate till they were satisfied, and washed their hands, and resumed their seats.

The heart of Ghanim was now troubled with reflections upon his merchandize, and he was fearful of the thieves, and said within himself, I am a stranger, and suspected of possessing wealth, and if I pass the night far away from my abode, the thieves will steal the money and the loads. So, fearing for his property, he arose and went forth from among the company, asking their leave to depart on account of some business that he had to transact, and followed the beaten track until he came to the gate of the city : but it

was then midnight, and he found the gate of the city shut, and saw no one coming or going, and heard not a sound save the barking of the dogs, and the howling of the wolves ; whereupon he exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God ! I was in fear for my property, and came hither on account of it, and have found the gate shut, and now I have become in fear for my life !—He then returned to seek for himself a place in which to sleep until the morning ; and, finding a private burial-place enclosed by four walls, with a palm-tree within it, and a gate-way of hard stone, open, he entered it, and desired to sleep ; but sleep came not to him.

Tremor and gloom overcame him, thus lying among the tombs, and he rose upon his feet, and, opening the door, looked out, and beheld a light gleaming in the distance in the direction of the city-gate. He advanced a few steps, and saw the light approaching in the way which led to the burial-place in which he was taking refuge ; whereupon Ghanim feared for himself, and hastily closed the door, and climbed up into the palm-tree, and concealed himself in the midst of its branches. The light continued to approach the tomb by little and little until it came very near ; and as he looked attentively at it, he perceived three black slaves, two of whom were bearing a chest, the other having in his hand an adze and a lantern ; and as they drew near, one of the two slaves who were bearing the chest said, What aileth thee, O Sawab ?—to which the other of the two replied, What aileth thee, O Kafur ? The former rejoined, Were we not here at the hour of nightfall, and did we not leave the door open ?—Yes, answered the other : what thou sayest is true.—See then, resumed the first speaker, it is shut and barred.—Upon this, the third, who was carrying the adze and light, and whose name was Bakhit, said, How small is your sense ! Know ye not that the owners of the gardens go forth from Baghdad and repair hither, and, evening overtaking them, enter this place, and shut the door upon themselves, through fear, lest the blacks, like ourselves, should take them and roast them and eat them ?—Thou hast spoken truth, they answered ; but there is none among us of less sense than thyself.—Verily, he replied, ye will not believe me until we

enter the burial-place and find some one in it : and I imagine that, if any one be in it, and have seen the light, he hath betaken himself to the top of the palm-tree.

When Ghanim heard these words of the slave, he said within himself, How cunning is this slave ! May Allah disgrace the blacks for their malice and villainy ! There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great ! What will deliver me from this difficulty ?—The two who were bearing the chest then said to him who had the adze, Climb over the wall, and open to us the door, O Bakhit ; for we are fatigued with carrying the chest upon our necks : and if thou open to us the door, we will give thee one of the persons whom we take, and we will fry him for thee excellently, so that not a drop of his fat shall be lost. But he replied, I am afraid of a thing that my little sense hath suggested to me : let us throw over the chest behind the door ; for it is our deposit. They said to him, If we throw it, it will break.—I am afraid, he rejoined, that there may be, within the tomb, robbers who slay men and steal their property ; for when evening overtaketh them they enter these places to divide what they have taken.—O thou of little sense, exclaimed the two others ; can they enter here ?—They then put down the chest, and climbed up the wall, and descended, and opened the door, while the third slave, Bakhit, stood waiting for them with the light, and a basket containing some plaster : after which they seated themselves, having closed the door ; and one of them said, O my brother, we are tired with walking and taking up and putting down, and opening the door and shutting it, and it is now midnight, and we have not strength remaining to open the tomb and to bury the chest ; wherefore we will sit here three hours to rest ourselves, and then rise and accomplish our business : but each of us shall in the mean time tell his story, and relate all that hath happened to him from beginning to end. So the first, who carried the light, told his story ;⁷⁴ after which, another of the slaves thus began.

THE STORY OF THE SLAVE KAFUR

Know, O my brothers, that I was, at the commencement of my career, a boy of eight years, and I used to tell one lie to the slave-merchants every year, so that they fell out with each other in consequence, and the slave-merchant my master, becoming impatient of me, committed me to the broker, desiring him to cry, Who will buy this slave with this fault? He was therefore asked, What is his fault? —and answered, He telleth one lie every year. And a merchant approached the broker, and said to him, How much have they bidden for this slave with his fault? He answered, They have bidden six hundred pieces of silver.—Then thou shalt have twenty for thyself, replied the merchant. So the broker introduced him to the slave-merchant, who received from him the money, and the broker conveyed me to the dwelling of the merchant, and took his brokerage.

The merchant clad me in a dress suitable to my condition, and I continued with him for the remainder of the year, until the new year commenced with prosperity. It was a blessed year, plenteous in the produce of the earth, and the merchants began to give entertainments, every day one taking his turn to do so, until it was my master's turn to give an entertainment in a garden within the city. So he went, and the other merchants also, and he took for them what they required of food and other provisions, and they sat eating and drinking and carousing till noon, when my master wanted something from the house, and said, O slave, mount the mule, and go to the house, and bring, from thy mistress, such a thing, and return quickly.

I obeyed, therefore, and went to the house; but when I approached it, I shrieked out, and shed tears; whereupon the people of the quarter assembled together, old and young; and my master's wife and daughters, hearing my cry, opened the door, and asked me what was the matter. I answered them, My master was sitting beneath an old wall, he and his friends, and it fell upon them; and when I beheld what

happened to them, I mounted the mule, and came in haste to inform you. And when his children and wife heard these words, they shrieked, and tore their clothes, and slapped their faces, and the neighbours came to them. Then my master's wife overturned the furniture of the house, one thing upon another, and pulled down its shelves, and broke its shutters and its windows, and smeared its walls with mud and indigo, and said to me, Wo to thee, O Kafur! Come hither and help me, and demolish these cupboards, and smash these vessels and this China-ware.—So I went to her, and destroyed with her the shelves of the house and all that was upon them, and its cupboards and what they contained, and went about over the terraces and through every place until I had laid waste the whole, crying all the while, Oh my master! My mistress then went forth, with her face uncovered, and only with her head-veil, and the girls and boys went with her, saying to me, O Kafur, walk on before us, and shew us the place where thy master lieth dead beneath the wall, that we may take him forth from under the ruins, and carry him in a bier, and bring him to the house, and convey his corpse in a handsome manner to the burial. So I walked before them, crying, Oh my master!—and they followed me with their faces and heads uncovered, crying, Oh our misfortune! Oh our calamity!—and there was none among the men, nor among the women, nor among the children, nor a maiden, nor an old woman, [in the quarter,] who did not accompany us; and all of them slapped themselves in the excess of their lamentation. Thus I went with them through the city; and the people asking the news, they informed them of that which they had heard from me; and the people exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great! We will go to the Wali, and acquaint him.—And when they arrived before the Wali, they informed him; and he mounted, and took with him labourers with axes and baskets, and they followed my footsteps, accompanied by a crowd of people.

I preceded them, weeping and crying out, and throwing dust upon my head, and slapping my face; and when I came to the party in the garden, and my master beheld me, I slapped my face, and exclaimed, Oh my mistress! who

will have pity upon me after my mistress? Would that I had been her sacrifice!—When my master, therefore, saw me, he was confounded, his countenance became pale, and he said, What aileth thee, O Kafur, and what is this predicament, and what is the news? I answered him, When thou sentest me to the house to bring thee what thou wantedst, I went thither and entered the house, and found that the wall of the saloon had fallen, and that the whole saloon had tumbled down upon my mistress and her children.—And did not thy mistress, said he, escape? I answered, No: not one of them escaped; and the first of them that died was my mistress the elder.—But did my youngest daughter escape? he asked. I answered, No.—And what, said he, hath become of the mule that I ride: is she safe? —No, O my master, I answered: for the walls of the house and the walls of the stable tumbled down upon all that was in the house; even upon the sheep and the geese and the hens, and all of them became a mass of flesh beneath the ruins; not one of them escaped. He then said to me, And thy master the elder? I answered, No: not one escaped; and now there remains neither house nor inhabitant, nor any trace of them; and as to the sheep and the geese and the hens, the cats and dogs have now eaten them.—And when my master heard my words, the light became darkness before his face, and he was no longer master of his senses nor of his reason, and was unable to stand upon his feet: he was paralyzed, and the strength of his back failed him, and he rent his clothes and plucked his beard and slapped his face and threw his turban from his head, and ceased not to slap his face until the blood flowed from it: and he began to cry, Ah! Oh my children! Ah! Oh my wife! Ah! Oh my misfortune! Unto whom hath happened the like of that which hath happened to me?—The merchants, also, his companions, joined with him in cries and lamentations, and were moved with pity for his case, and rent their clothes; and my master went forth from the garden, beating himself for the calamity that had [as he supposed] befallen him, and redoubled the blows upon his face, seeming as though he were drunk.

And as the party thus went out from the gate of the

garden, they beheld a great dust, and heard tumultuous cries, and, looking in that direction, saw the crowd approaching them. This crowd was the Wali and his attendants, and a concourse of people who had come to gratify their curiosity, with the merchant's family behind them, shrieking and crying with violent lamentation and excessive grief; and the first who accosted my master were his wife and children. On beholding these, he was confounded, and laughed, and said to them, How are ye; and what hath happened to you in the house, and what hath befallen you? And when they saw him, they exclaimed, Praise be to God for thy safety! And they threw themselves upon him, and his children clung to him, crying out, Oh our father! Praise be to God for thy safety, O our father!—and his wife said to him, Praise be to God who hath shewn us thy face in safety!—and she was stupefied, and her reason fled from her at that which she beheld. She then said to him, How didst thou escape with thy friends?—And how, said he, were ye in the house?—We were all well, they answered, in prosperity and health, and no evil hath befallen our house, save that thy slave Kafur came to us with his head uncovered and his clothes rent, crying out, Oh my master! Oh my master!—and we said to him, What is the matter, O Kafur?—and he answered, My master was sitting under a wall in the garden, and it fell upon him, and he died.—By Allah, replied my master, he came to me just now, crying, Oh my mistress! Oh the children of my mistress!—and said, My mistress and her children are all dead!

He then looked aside, and, seeing me with my turban falling from my head, while I still cried out and wept violently and threw dust upon my head, he called out to me: so I approached him, and he said to me, Wo to thee! O malevolent slave! O misbegotten wretch! O thou of accursed race! What events hast thou brought about! But, by Allah, I will strip off thy skin from thy flesh, and cut thy flesh from thy bones!—By Allah, replied I, thou canst not do to me anything; for thou boughtest me with my fault, on this condition, the witnesses testifying that thou boughtest me with my fault, thou knowing it, and it was, that I was accustomed to tell one lie every year; and this

is but half a lie, and when the year is complete I will tell the other half of it ; so it will be an entire lie. But upon this, he cried out at me, O most accursed of slaves ! is this but half a lie ? Nay, it is an exceeding calamity ! Depart from me ; for thou art free !*—By Allah, I replied, if thou liberate me, I will not liberate thee until the year be complete, and I tell the remaining half of the lie ; and when I have completed it, then take me to the market, and sell me as thou boughtest me with my fault, and liberate me not ; for I have no trade by means of which to procure my subsistence : this is a legal proposition that I have stated to thee, laid down by the lawyers in the Chapter of Emancipation.—While we were thus talking, the crowd approached, with the people of the quarter, women and men, come to mourn, and the Wali with his attendants : and my master and the other merchants went to the Wali, and acquainted him with the case, and that this was but half a lie ; and when the people who were present heard this, they were astonished at this lie, and struck with the utmost wonder ; and they cursed and reviled me ; while I stood laughing, and saying, How can my master kill me when he bought me with this fault ?

So when my master went to the house, he found it in a state of ruin (and it was I who destroyed the greater part, and broke in it things worth a large sum of money) ; and his wife said to him, It was Kafur who broke the vessels and the China-ware. Upon this, his rage increased, and he exclaimed, By Allah ! in my life I have never seen such a misbegotten wretch as this slave ; yet he calleth it half a lie ! What then would have been the result had it been a whole lie ! In that case, he had destroyed a city, or two cities !—Then, in the excess of his rage, he went to the Wali, who inflicted upon me a severe beating, so that I became insensible, and swooned away ; after which, my master contrived means of obtaining for me a high price, and I ceased not to excite disturbances in the places into which I was sold, and was transferred from emir to emir

* To free a slave who has not the means of providing for himself is almost the heaviest punishment that can be inflicted upon him, and, unless for a heinous crime, is considered a disgraceful action.

and from grandee to grandee, by sale and purchase, until I entered the palace of the Prince of the Faithful, and now my spirit is broken, and my strength hath failed.

When the other slaves had heard his story, they laughed at it, and said to him, Verily thou art a villain, the son of a villain: thou hast told an abominable lie. The first and second then said to the third slave, Relate to us thy story. —O sons of my uncle, he replied, all that hath just been related is nonsense: but my story is long, and this is not a time to tell it; for the morning, O sons of my uncle, is near, and perhaps it may overtake us with this chest still before us, and we shall be disgraced among the public, and our lives will be lost: haste then to work, and when we have finished, and returned home, I will relate to you my story. So they put down the light, and dug a trench of the size of the chest between four tombs; Kafur digging, and Sawab removing the earth in baskets, until they had dug to the depth of half a fathom, when they put the chest into the trench, and replaced the earth over it, and went forth from the enclosure, and, having closed the gate, disappeared from before the eyes of Ghanim the son of Eyyub.

When, therefore, they had left the place vacant unto Ghanim, and he knew that he was alone, his mind became busied respecting the contents of the chest, and he said within himself, What can this chest contain? He waited until daybreak gleamed and shone forth, and then descended from the palm-tree, and removed the earth with his hand until he had uncovered the chest and disengaged it, when he took a stone, and struck with it the lock, and broke it; and lifting up the cover, he looked in, and beheld a sleeping damsel, stupefied with benj, but still breathing: she was of beautiful and lovely person, and decked with ornaments of gold, and necklaces of jewels, worth a kingdom, and of a value that no money would equal. When Ghanim the son of Eyyub beheld her, he knew that she had been the object of a plot, and, being convinced of this, he pulled her up until he had lifted her out of the chest, and laid her upon her back; and as soon as she scented the breeze, and the

air entered her nostrils and her mouth and throat, she sneezed, and then was choked, and coughed, whereupon there fell from her throat a round piece of benj, of such potency that if an elephant smelt it he would sleep from one night to another. She then opened her eyes, and, looking round, said, with an eloquent voice, Wo to thee, O wind ! Thou neither satisfiest the thirsty, nor cheerest by thy presence the satisfied with drink ! Where is Zahr-el-Bustan ?—But no one answered her. Then looking aside, she exclaimed, Sabihah ! Shejer-ed-Durr ! Nur-el-Huda ! Nejmet-es-Subh ! Art thou awake ? Nuzeh ! Hulweh ! Zarifeh ! Speak ye !—But no one answered her. And she looked round about her, and exclaimed, Alas for me; that I am transported to the tombs ! O Thou who knowest the secrets of the breasts, and recompensest on the day of resurrection ! who hath brought me from among the curtains and the veils, and placed me amid four tombs ?

While she was saying all this, Ghanim stood still ; but he now said to her, O my mistress, there are neither veils nor palaces nor tombs for thee here : this is none other than thy slave Ghanim the son of Eyyub, whom the King who is omniscient with respect to hidden things hath impelled hither that he may deliver thee from these troubles, and that the utmost of thy desires may be accomplished unto thee.—And he was silent ; and when she became convinced of the truth of the case, she exclaimed, I testify that there is no deity but God, and I testify that Mohammad is God's Apostle ! Then looking towards Ghanim, with her hands placed upon her breast, she said to him, with a sweet voice, O auspicious youth, who brought me unto this place ? For now I have recovered my senses.—O my mistress, he answered, three eunuchs came bearing this chest :—and he related to her all that had happened, and how the evening had overtaken him, so that he became the means of her preservation, and that otherwise she had died of suffocation ; and he inquired of her respecting her history.—O youth, she replied, praise be to God who hath cast me into the hands of one like thee ! Rise therefore now, and put me into the chest, and go forth to the road, and as soon as thou shalt find any one who lets out asses

or other beasts, or a muleteer, hire him to transport this chest, and convey me to thy house; and when I am in thy abode it will be well, and I will relate to thee my story, and acquaint thee with my tale, and good fortune will accrue to thee through my means.—So Ghanim rejoiced, and he went forth into the desert tract.

The day had begun to gleam, the sun rose in splendour, and the people came walking forth; and Ghanim hired a man with a mule, and brought him to the burial-place. He then lifted the chest, after he had put the damsel into it, and, with his heart smitten by love for her, proceeded with her, full of joy, for she was a damsel worth ten thousand pieces of gold, and was decked with ornaments and apparel of enormous value. Scarcely had he found himself at his house when he put down the chest, and opened it, and took forth from it the damsel, who looked, and saw that the place was a handsome dwelling furnished with variegated carpets, and she observed the gay colours and various embellishments, and beheld stuffs packed up, and loads of goods, and other property: so she knew that he was a great merchant, and a man of wealth. She then uncovered her face, and looked at him, and observed him to be a handsome young man, and loved him; and she said to him, Bring us something to eat. He answered her, On the head and the eye be thy commands:—and went to the market, and bought a roasted lamb, and a dish of sweetmeat, and procured some dried fruits, and candles and wine, and the requisite apparatus for perfumes. Then returning to the house, he took in the things, and when the damsel saw him, she laughed, and kissed him, and embraced him, and began to caress him, so that the love which he felt increased, and took entire possession of his heart. They then ate and drank until the approach of night, and their love was mutual; for they were both of the same age, and both equal in comeliness; and when the night approached, the Distracted Slave of Love, Ghanim the son of Eyyub, rose and lighted the candles and lamps, and the chamber glistened: he then brought forth the wine-service, and prepared the table, and sat down with her; he filling and handing to her, and she filling and handing to him, while they both toyed and

laughed and recited verses : their gaiety increased, and they were engrossed by mutual love.—Extolled be the perfection of the Uniter of Hearts !—Thus they continued until it was near morning, when sleep overcame them, and each of them slept apart from the other till morning came.

Ghanim the son of Eyyub then arose, and went forth to the market, and bought what was requisite of vegetables and meat and wine and other provisions, and brought them to the house ; and he again sat with her to eat, and they ate until they were satisfied ; after which he brought the wine, and they drank and toyed together till their cheeks reddened and their eyes became more intensely black ;⁷⁵ and Ghanim said, O my mistress, have compassion on the captive of thy love, and him whom thine eyes have slain. I had remained sound of heart but for thee.—Then he wept a while ; and she replied, O my master, and light of mine eye, By Allah, I love thee and confide in thee ; but I know that thou canst not be united to me.—And what hindereth ? said he. She answered, I will this night relate to thee my story, that thou mayest accept my excuse. But they continued thus a whole month ; and after this, one night, when Ghanim was complaining to her of his passion, she said to him, I will now explain to thee my case, that thou mayest know my dignity, and that my secret may be revealed to thee, and my excuse become manifest to thee. He replied, Well. And she took hold of a band which confined a part of her dress, and said to him, O my master, read what is on this border. So he took the border in his hand, and looked at it, and found worked upon it in gold, I am thine, and thou art mine, O descendant of the Prophet's Uncle.* And when he had read this, he let fall his hand, and said to her, Reveal to me thy history. She answered, Well :—and thus began :—

Know that I am a favourite slave of the Prince of the Faithful, and my name is Kut-el-Kulub. The Prince of the Faithful, after he had reared me in his palace, and I had grown up, observed my qualities, and the beauty and loveliness with which my Lord had endowed me, and loved me excessively : he took me and lodged me in a private

* [I.e. Harun Er-Rashid, descended from El-'Abbas, the uncle of Mohammad.]

apartment, and appointed me ten female slaves to serve me, and then gave me those ornaments which thou seest with me. After this, the Khalifeh went forth one day on a journey to one of the surrounding provinces, and the lady Zubeydeh came to one of the female slaves who were in my service, and said, When thy mistress Kut-el-Kulub sleepeth, put this piece of benj into her nose and her drink, and thou shalt receive from me a sum of money that will satisfy thee. The slave replied, Most willingly :—and she received the benj from her, rejoicing on account of the money, and because she had been originally Zubeydeh's slave ; and she insinuated the benj into me, whereupon I fell upon the floor, with my head bent down to my feet, and seemed to be in another world. And when she could devise no other stratagem, she put me into that chest, and privily summoned the black slaves, and, after having given presents to them and to the door-keepers, sent me with the black slaves on the night when thou wast reposing at the top of the palm-tree : and they did with me as thou sawest, and my deliverance was effected through thy means. Then thou broughtest me unto this place, where thou hast treated me with the utmost kindness. This is my story ; and I know not what hath happened to the Khalifeh during my absence. Know, therefore, my dignity ; and divulge not my case.

When Ghanim the son of Eyyub heard these words of Kut-el-Kulub, and discovered that she was the favourite of the Khalifeh, he drew back, in his awe of the Khalifeh, and sat alone at one side of the chamber, blaming himself, and reflecting upon his situation, perplexed by love of her to whom he could not be united ; and he wept from the violence of his desire, and the fierceness of his passion and distraction, and began to complain of fortune and its injustice.—Extolled be the perfection of Him who causeth the hearts of the generous to be troubled with love, and endueth not the mean with so much of it as equalleth the weight of a grain !—And upon this, Kut-el-Kulub rose to him, and embraced and kissed him, and, her heart being entirely captivated by his love, she revealed what she had hidden of the extent of her passion, and encircled his neck with her arms, and kissed him again ; but he withdrew from

her embrace, in his fear of the Khalifeh. They then conversed a while, drowned in the sea of mutual love, and so remained until day, when Ghanim arose, and went forth to the market as usual, and procured what was requisite, and, returning to the house, found Kut-el-Kulub weeping : but as soon as she beheld him, she ceased from her tears, and smiled, and said to him, Thou hast made me desolate by thine absence, O beloved of my heart ! By Allah, this hour during which thou hast been away from me hath appeared as a year ; for I cannot endure thy separation ; and see, I have thus shewn thee my state, through the violence of my passion. Arise therefore now, and mind not what hath happened, but take me as thy wife.—But he replied, I seek refuge with Allah ! This is a thing that cannot be. How should the dog sit in the place of the lion ? What belongeth to my lord is forbidden me to approach.—He then tore himself from her, and sat apart ; and she increased in love through his refusal.—In this manner they passed three long months ; and whenever she made any advances to him he withdrew from her, and said, Whatever belongeth to the master is forbidden to the slave.—Such was the case of the Distracted Slave of Love, Ghanim the son of Eyyub.

Meanwhile, Zubeydeh, during the absence of the Khalifeh, having acted thus with Kut-el-Kulub, became perplexed, saying within herself, What shall I say to the Khalifeh when he cometh and inquireth respecting her ; and what shall be my answer to him ? She then called for an old woman who resided with her, and acquainted her with her secret, and said to her, What shall I do, now that Kut-el-Kulub is no more ? The old woman answered, when she understood the affair, Know, O my mistress, that the return of the Khalifeh is near ; but I will send to a carpenter, and desire him to make a wooden image of a corpse, and they shall dig for it a grave, and thou shalt light candles and lamps around it, and command every one who is in the palace to wear black, and order thy female slaves and eunuchs, as soon as they know of the Khalifeh's return from his journey, to raise lamentations in the vestibules, and when he enters and asks the news, they shall answer him, Kut-el-Kulub is dead ; and may God abundantly compensate

thee for the loss of her!—and from the esteem with which she was regarded by our mistress, she hath buried her in her own palace. So when he heareth this, he will weep, and the event will distress him. Then he will cause the readers to sit up by night at her tomb to perform recitations of the Kur'an: and if he say within himself, Surely the daughter of my uncle, through her jealousy, hath been led to destroy Kut-el-Kulub,—or the distraction of love overpower him, and he give orders to take her forth from the tomb, fear not from that; for if they dig down to the image in the form of a human being, and take it forth, shrouded in costly grave-clothes, and the Khalifeh desire to remove the grave-clothes from it, to behold her, do thou prevent him, and the fear of the world to come will withhold him; and do thou say to him, To behold her corpse uncovered is unlawful. Then he will believe her death, and will return her image to its place, and thank thee for thy conduct, and thou shalt escape, if it please God, from this difficulty.—When the lady Zubeydeh, therefore, heard what she said, she approved it, and bestowed upon her a dress of honour, and commanded her to do this, having given her a sum of money. So the old woman set about the business immediately, and ordered the carpenter to make for her an image as above described; and when it was finished, she brought it to the lady Zubeydeh, and she shrouded it, and lighted the candles and lamps, and spread the carpets around the tomb, and clad herself in black, ordering the female slaves to do the same; and the news was spread through the palace, that Kut-el-Kulub had died.

Some time after this, the Khalifeh returned from his journey, and went up to his palace; but his mind was occupied only with Kut-el-Kulub; and seeing the pages and eunuchs and female slaves all clad in black, his heart was agitated; and when he entered the palace of the lady Zubeydeh, and beheld her also clad in black, he inquired the reason of it, and they informed him of the death of Kut-el-Kulub. Upon hearing this, he fell down in a swoon; and when he recovered, he asked where was her tomb; and the lady Zubeydeh answered, Know, O Prince of the Faithful, that, on account of the esteem in which she was

held by me, I buried her in my palace. So the Khalifeh, entering the palace in his travelling-dress, proceeded to visit the tomb of Kut-el-Kulub, and found the carpets spread, and the candles and lamps lighted ; and when he beheld this, he thanked her for what she had done. But afterwards he became perplexed, and wavered a while between belief and disbelief, until suspicion overcame him, and he gave orders to open the tomb and to take her out : when, however, he saw the grave-clothes, and was about to remove them that he might behold her, he feared God (whose name be exalted !), and the old woman said, Restore her to her place. Then immediately the Khalifeh commanded to bring the professors of religion and law, and the readers, and they performed recitations of the whole of the Kur'an at her tomb, while he sat by the side of it weeping until he became insensible.

He continued to frequent the tomb for the space of a month ; after which it happened that he entered the Harim, after the Emirs and Wezirs had dispersed from before him to their houses, and he slept a while, and a female slave sat at his head, and another at his feet ; and after sleep had overcome him he awoke, and opened his eyes, and heard the damsel who was at his head say to her who was at his feet, Wo to thee, O Kheyzuran !—Wherefore, O Kadib ? said the other.—Our lord, rejoined the first, is ignorant of what hath happened ; so he sitteth up by night at a tomb in which there is nothing but a carved image, the work of the carpenter.—And what then, asked the other damsel, hath befallen Kut-el-Kulub ? Her companion answered, Know that our mistress Zubeydeh sent some benj by a female slave, and she stupified her with it, and when the benj had taken effect upon her, she put her in a chest, and sent her away with Sawab and Kafur, commanding them to throw her into the tomb. Upon this, Kheyzuran said, Wo to thee, O Kadib ! Is not the lady Kut-el-Kulub dead ?—Heaven preserve her youth from death ! answered Kadib : I heard the lady Zubeydeh say that Kut-el-Kulub was with a young merchant named Ghanim of Damascus, and that she had been with him, including this day, four months ; and our lord here weepeth and passeth sleepless nights at a

tomb in which there is no corpse.—Thus they conversed together, while the Khalifeh heard their words; and when they had finished their conversation, and he had become acquainted with the event, that this tomb was a false one, and that Kut-el-Kulub had been with Ghanim the son of Eyyub for the space of four months, he was violently incensed, and arose, and summoned the Emirs of his court; whereupon the Wezir Ja'far El-Barmeki presented himself and kissed the ground before him, and the Khalifeh said to him, in anger, Descend, O Ja'far, with a body of men, and inquire for the house of Ghanim the son of Eyyub, and assault it suddenly, and bring him hither with my female slave Kut-el-Kulub; and I will assuredly torture him.

Ja'far replied, I hear and obey;—and he went forth with his attendants, the Wali also accompanying him, and they proceeded until they arrived at Ghanim's house. Ghanim had just before gone out and brought a pot of meat, and was about to stretch forth his hand to eat of it with Kut-el-Kulub, when she looked out, and found that the house was beset on all sides, and the Wezir and the Wali and the officers of violence and the memluks with drawn swords were surrounding it as the black surrounds the pupil of the eye; and upon this she knew that tidings of her situation had reached the ears of the Khalifeh her lord, and she made sure of destruction; her countenance became pale, and her beauty changed, and, looking towards Ghanim, she said to him, O my beloved, save thyself!—How shall I do, said he, and whither shall I flee, when my wealth and means of subsistence are in this house? But she answered, Delay not, lest thou perish, and thy wealth also be lost.—O my mistress, and light of mine eye, rejoined he, how can I contrive to go forth when they are surrounding the house?—Fear not, she answered:—and she pulled off his clothes, and clad him in worn-out, ragged garments, and, taking the pot that had contained the meat, placed it upon his head, and put in it a little bread and a saucer of meat, and said to him, Go forth by the help of this stratagem, and thou hast nothing to fear with respect to me, for I know what I am able to do with the Khalifeh. When Ghanim, therefore, heard the words of Kut-el-Kulub, and the advice which she gave

him, he went forth through the midst of them, bearing the pot, and Providence protected him so that he escaped from the snares and injuries which menaced him, by the blessing of his good conscience.

And when the Wezir Ja'far arrived at the house, he dismounted from his horse, and entered, and looked at Kut-el-Kulub, who had adorned herself, and filled a chest with gold and ornaments and jewels and rarities, such as were light to carry and of great value; and when Ja'far came in to her, she rose upon her feet, and kissed the ground before him, saying to him, O my master, the Pen hath written what God hath decreed. But Ja'far, when he beheld her situation, replied, By Allah, O my mistress, he gave me no order but to arrest Ghanim the son of Eyyub. And she said, Know that he hath packed up some bales of merchandise, and gone with them to Damascus, and I know nothing more than this; and I request thee to take care of this chest for me, and to convey it to the palace of the Prince of the Faithful. So Ja'far answered, I hear and obey:—and he took the chest, and gave orders that it should be conveyed, together with Kut-el-Kulub, to the palace of the Khalifeh, treating her with honour and respect. This took place after they had plundered the house of Ghanim; and they went to the Khalifeh, and Ja'far related to him all that had happened; whereupon the Khalifeh appointed to Kut-el-Kulub a dark chamber, and there lodged her, commissioning an old woman to serve her; for he imagined that Ghanim had acted dishonestly towards her.

He then wrote a letter to the Emir Mohammad the son of Suleyman Ez-Zeyni, who was viceroy of Damascus, containing as follows:—As soon as this letter cometh to thy hands, thou shalt arrest Ghanim the son of Eyyub, and send him unto me.—So when the mandate was brought to him, he kissed it, and put it upon his head, and caused it to be proclaimed through the market-street, Whosoever desireth to plunder, let him repair to the house of Ghanim the son of Eyyub. And they came to the house, and found that the mother of Ghanim, and his sister, had made for them a tomb, and sat by it weeping; and they laid hold upon them, and plundered the house, and the mother and sister knew

not the cause : and when they brought them before the Sultan, he inquired of them respecting Ghanim the son of Eyyub ; and they answered him, For the space of a year we have obtained no tidings of him.—And they restored them to their place.

In the mean time, Ghanim the son of Eyyub, the Distracted Slave of Love, when his wealth had been seized, was perplexed, and began to weep for himself so as to break his heart. He walked on, and ceased not on his way to the close of day, suffering from excessive hunger and fatigue, until he arrived at a village, where he entered a mosque, and seated himself upon a round mat, and he leaned his back against one of the walls of the building, and then threw himself down, under the influence of extreme hunger and weariness. There he remained until the morning, his heart palpitating from want of food ; vermin attacked his body, his breath became fetid, and he was altogether changed ; and the people of that village, coming to perform the morning-prayers, found him lying there sick through want of food, yet exhibiting evident traces of former affluence ; and when they approached him, they found him cold and hungry. They clad him, therefore, with an old garment having ragged sleeves, and said to him, Whence art thou, O stranger, and what is the cause of thine infirmity ? And Ghanim opened his eyes and looked at them and wept ; but he returned them no answer. Then one of them, knowing the violence of his hunger, went and brought him a saucer of honey and two cakes of bread, and he ate, while they sat around him until the sun rose, when they departed to their several occupations.—In this state he remained among them for a month, and his infirmity and disease increased ; so the people, commiserating him, consulted together respecting his case, and agreed to transport him to the hospital at Baghdad.

Now while they were thus conversing, lo, two women, beggars, came in to him ; and they were his mother and sister ; and when he beheld them, he gave them the bread that was at his head, and they slept by him the next night ; but he knew them not. And on the following day, the people of the village came to him, bringing a camel, and said to its

owner, Convey this sick person on the camel, and when thou hast arrived at Baghdad, put him down at the door of the hospital: perhaps he may recover his health, and thou wilt receive a recompense. He answered them, I hear and obey. So they brought forth Ghanim the son of Eyyub from the mosque, and placed him, with the round mat upon which he was sleeping, on the camel; and his mother and sister came to look at him among the other people; but they knew him not. Then observing him attentively, they said, Verily he resembleth our Ghanim! Can he be this sick person or not?—But as to Ghanim, he awoke not until he was mounted on the camel, and he began to weep and moan; and the people of the village saw his mother and sister weeping for him, though they did not know him. Then his mother and sister journeyed onwards to Baghdad, while the camel-driver also proceeded without stopping until he had deposited Ghanim at the door of the hospital, when he took his camel, and returned.

Ghanim remained lying there until the morning; and when the people began to pass along the street, they beheld him. He had become so emaciated that his form resembled that of a toothpick, and the people ceased not to gaze at him until the Sheykh of the market came and repelled them from him, and said, I will gain Paradise by means of this poor person; for if they take him into the hospital they will kill him in one day. He then ordered his young men to carry him, and they conveyed him to his house, where he spread for him a new bed, and put for him a new cushion, and said to his wife, Serve him faithfully. She replied, On the head:—and she tucked up her sleeves, and, having heated for him some water, washed his hands and feet and body, and clothed him in a vest of one of her female slaves. She then gave him to drink a cup of wine, and sprinkled rose-water upon him: so he recovered his senses; and he remembered his beloved, Kut-el-Kulub, and his anguish increased.—Thus did it happen to Ghanim.

Now as to Kut-el-Kulub,—when the Khalifeh, incensed against her, had lodged her in the dark chamber, she remained there in the same state for eighty days; and it happened that the Khalifeh passed one day by that place,

and heard her reciting verses ; and when she had finished her recitation of them, she exclaimed, O my beloved ! O Ghanim ! How kind art thou, and how chaste is thy disposition ! Thou hast acted with kindness unto him who hath injured thee, and hast guarded the honour of him who hath violated thine, and hast protected his harim, and he hath enslaved both thee and thy family ; but thou wilt assuredly stand, with the Prince of the Faithful, before a Just Judge, and thou wilt obtain justice against him on the day when the judge shall be God ; and the witnesses, the angels !—And when the Khalifeh heard her words, and understood her complaint, he knew that she was injured ; and he entered his palace, and sent the eunuch to her, and when she came before him she hung down her head, with weeping eye, and sorrowful heart ; and he said to her, O Kut-el-Kulub, I see that thou complainest of my oppression, and accusest me of tyranny, and thinkest that I have injured him who hath acted kindly unto me. Who then is he who hath guarded my honour and I have violated his ; and who hath protected my harim and I have enslaved his ?—She answered him, Ghanim the son of Eyyub ; for he hath not attempted any dishonest action towards me, by thy beneficence, O Prince of the Faithful !—Upon this the Khalifeh exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God !—and then added, O Kut-el-Kulub, desire of me what thou wilt, and I will grant thy wish. So she replied, I desire of thee my beloved, Ghanim the son of Eyyub. And when he heard her words, he said, I will cause him to be brought hither, if it be the will of God, in honour.—O Prince of the Faithful, she rejoined, when thou shalt have caused him to be brought, wilt thou present me to him ? He answered, When I have had him brought, I will present thee to him, the present of a generous man who will not revoke his gift. So she said, O Prince of the Faithful, permit me to search about for him : perhaps God may unite me with him. And he replied, Do as thou wilt.

Upon this she rejoiced, and went forth, taking with her a thousand pieces of gold, and visited the sheykh, and gave alms for the sake of Ghanim : and on the following day she went to the market of the merchants, and gave

to the chief of the market some money, saying to him, Bestow it in alms upon the strangers. Then again, in the following week, she went forth, taking with her a thousand pieces of gold, and, entering the market of the goldsmiths and jewellers, summoned the chief of the market, and he came, and she gave him the thousand pieces of gold, and said to him, Bestow it in alms upon the strangers :—whereupon the chief, who was the Sheykh of the market before mentioned, looked at her, and said to her, Wilt thou go with me to my house, to look at a young stranger there, and see how elegant he is, and how perfectly charming ? For it is probable that he is Ghanim the son of Eyyub, the Distracted Slave of Love.—But the chief had no knowledge of him, and imagined that he was a poor person involved in debt, whose wealth had been taken from him, or a lover parted from his beloved. And when she heard his words, her heart beat, and her affections were engrossed by him, and she answered, Send with me some one to conduct me to thy house. So he sent with her a young boy, who conducted her to the house where the stranger was lodged, and she thanked him for doing so ; and when she entered the house, and saluted the chief's wife, the latter arose, and kissed the ground before her ; for she knew her. Then Kut-el-Kulub said to her, Where is the sick person who is with you ? And she wept, and answered, Here he is, O my mistress : but he is of a respectable family, and exhibiteth traces of former affluence. And Kut-el-Kulub looked towards the bed upon which he was lying, and, regarding him narrowly, beheld him as though he were Ghanim himself ; but his condition was changed, and he had become so emaciated that he resembled a toothpick, and the truth of his case was disguised from her, so that she did not discover him to be the person whom she sought ; but she was moved with compassion for him, and she wept, and exclaimed, Verily, strangers are objects of pity, though they be emirs in their own countries ! She then ordered for him supplies of wine and medicines, and sat at his head a while, and mounted, and returned to her palace ; and she continued to go forth to every market for the purpose of searching for Ghanim.

Soon after, the chief of the market brought the mother of Ghanim, and his sister Fitneh, and went with them to Kut-el-Kulub, and said to her, O most charitable lady, there have entered our city this day a woman and a girl of respectable origin, bearing evident traces of former affluence, but they are clad in garments of hair-cloth, and each of them hath a wallet hung to her neck, and their eyes are weeping, and their hearts sorrowful: so I have brought them unto thee, that thou mayest give them refuge, and preserve them from the disgrace of beggary; for they are not persons suited to ask alms of the sordid; and if it please God, we shall enter Paradise by their means.—By Allah, O my master, she replied, thou hast made me long to behold them! Where are they? Order them to come in.—So, upon this, Fitneh and her mother came in to Kut-el-Kulub, who, when she saw them, and observed that they were both distinguished by beauty, wept for them, and said, By Allah, they are persons of an affluent family, and traces of wealth are conspicuous in their appearance.—O my mistress, replied the chief of the market, we love the poor and indigent for the sake of future recompense; and probably the extortioners have oppressed these two persons, and plundered them of their wealth, and ruined their houses. Then these two females wept violently, and, remembering Ghanim the son of Eyyub, the Distracted Slave of Love, their wailing increased, and Kut-el-Kulub wept with them; and the mother of Ghanim exclaimed, We pray God to unite us with him whom we seek, and he is my son Ghanim the son of Eyyub. When Kut-el-Kulub, therefore, heard these words, she knew that this woman was the mother of her beloved, and that the other was his sister, and she wept until she fell down in a swoon; and when she recovered, she approached them, and said to them, Ye have nothing to fear; for this day is the first of your prosperity, and the last of your adversity: therefore grieve not. She then ordered the chief of the market to take them to his house, and to let his wife conduct them into the bath, and attire them in handsome clothing, and take care of them, and treat them with the utmost honour; and she gave him a sum of money.

Then, on the following day, Kut-el-Kulub mounted and

went again to the house of the chief of the market, and went in to visit his wife, who rose to her, and kissed the ground before her, and thanked her for her charity; and she saw that his wife had conducted the mother of Ghanim, and his sister, to the bath, and taken off their former clothes, and that the traces of their original affluence had become more conspicuous in consequence; and she sat a while conversing with them; after which she asked the wife of the chief of the market respecting the sick person who was with her. She answered, He is in the same state. And Kut-el-Kulub said, Arise, and let us look at him and visit him. So they both arose, with Ghanim's mother and sister, and went in to him, and seated themselves by him; and when Ghanim the son of Eyyub, the Distracted Slave of Love, heard one of them mention Kut-el-Kulub, emaciated as he was in body and limbs, his soul returned to him, and he raised his head from the pillow, and called out, O Kut-el-Kulub! She looked at him, therefore, and knew him, and cried, saying, Yes, O my beloved! He then said to her, Draw near to me. And she asked him, Art thou Ghanim the son of Eyyub, the Distracted Slave of Love? He answered her, Yes: I am he. And upon this, she fell down in a swoon; and when his sister and his mother heard their words, they cried out, Oh, our joy!—and in like manner fainted. And when they recovered, Kut-el-Kulub said to Ghanim, Praise be to God who hath united us with thee and with thy mother and sister! Then, approaching him, she related to him all that had happened to her with the Khalifeh, adding, I said to him, I have declared to thee the truth, O Prince of the Faithful:—and he believed my words, and approved thee; and he is now desiring to see thee. And she said to him, The Khalifeh hath given me to thee:—whereupon he was filled with the utmost joy: and Kut-el-Kulub said to them all, Quit not this place until I come again.

She then arose immediately, and departed to her palace, and removed thence the chest that she had brought from Ghanim's house, and took forth from it some pieces of gold, which she gave to the chief of the market, saying to him, Take these pieces of gold, and buy for each of them

four complete suits of dress of the best kinds of stuff, and twenty handkerchiefs, and whatever else they require. And after this, she conducted them to the bath, and gave orders to wash them, and prepared for them boiled meats, and infusion of galangal, and apple-water, after they had come forth from the bath and dressed themselves. For three days she remained with them, feeding them with fowls and with boiled meats, and giving them sherbet of refined sugar to drink; and after the three days their spirits returned to them. Then she conducted them again to the bath, and they came forth, and she changed their clothes, and, leaving them in the house of the chief of the market, went to the Khalifeh, and kissed the ground before him, and related to him the story, telling him that her master, Ghanim the son of Eyyub, the Distracted Slave of Love, had come, and that his mother and sister also had arrived. When the Khalifeh, therefore, heard these words of Kut-el-Kulub, he said to the eunuchs, Bring hither to me Ghanim. And Ja'far went down with them to bring him: but Kut-el-Kulub had gone before him; and she went in unto Ghanim, and said to him, The Khalifeh hath sent to thee to bring thee before him: have a care then to display eloquence of tongue, and firmness of heart, and sweetness of speech. And she attired him in a magnificent dress, and gave him pieces of gold in abundance, saying to him, Bestow plentifully upon the domestics of the Khalifeh as thou goest in to him. And lo, Ja'far approached him, mounted upon his mule, and Ghanim advanced to meet him, and greeted him with a prayer for long life, kissing the ground before him.

The planet of his prosperity had appeared, and the star of his glory had risen aloft, and Ja'far took him, and they proceeded until they entered into the presence of the Prince of the Faithful; and when Ghanim came before him, he looked towards the wezirs and emirs and chamberlains and lieutenants and the other officers of the court, and the warriors, and, being eloquent of tongue, firm of heart, delicate in the style of his language, and pleasing in the allusions it conveyed, he hung down his head towards the ground, and then looked towards the Khalifeh, and addressed him in a series of complimentary verses. And when he had

finished his recitation, the Khalifeh was delighted with the graces of his person, and pleased with the eloquence of his tongue and the sweetness of his speech; and he said to him, Approach me. He therefore approached him, and the Khalifeh said to him, Explain to me thy tale, and acquaint me with the truth of thy history. So Ghanim sat, and related to the Khalifeh all that had happened to him from beginning to end; and when the Khalifeh knew that he spoke truth, he bestowed upon him a dress of honour, and admitted him into his favour, and said to him, Acquit me of responsibility. And he did so, and said to him, O Prince of the Faithful, the slave and all that his hands possess belong to his master:—and the Khalifeh rejoiced. He then gave orders to appropriate a palace to him exclusively, and appointed him abundant pensions and allowances, and removed to him his mother and his sister. And the Khalifeh, hearing that his sister Fitneh was, in beauty (as her name imported), a temptation, demanded her of him in marriage. Ghanim therefore replied, She is thy hand-maid, and I am thy memluk. And the Khalifeh thanked him, and gave him a hundred thousand pieces of gold, and summoned the Kadi and witnesses, and they performed the marriage-contract. Then he and Ghanim visited their wives on the same day, the Khalifeh going to Fitneh, and Ghanim the son of Eyyub to Kut-el-Kulub; and on the following morning, the Khalifeh ordered that all that had happened to Ghanim, from first to last, should be committed to writing and inserted in the records, that his posterity might consider it, and wonder at the disposals of destiny, and commit their affairs unto the Creator of the night and the day.

CHAPTER VIII

[NIGHTS 107—137¹⁶]

THE STORY OF TAJ-EL-MULUK AND THE LADY DUNYA

THERE was, in former times, a city behind the mountains of Ispahan, called El-Medineh el-Khadra, and in it resided a King called the King Suleyman. He was a person of liberality and beneficence, and justice and integrity, and of a generous and obliging disposition: travellers repaired to him from every quarter, and his fame spread throughout all the regions and countries; and he reigned a long time in glory and security; but he was destitute of children and of wives.

He had a Wezir who nearly resembled him in his qualities, in liberality and other endowments; and it came to pass that he sent to this Wezir one day, and having summoned him into his presence, said to him, O Wezir, my heart is contracted, and my patience is overcome, and my strength is impaired, because I have neither a wife nor a child: this is not the usual way of Kings who rule over lords and poor men; for they rejoice in leaving children, and multiplying by them the number of their posterity; and the Prophet (God bless and save him!) hath said, Intermarry, and beget offspring, that ye may increase in number; for I shall contend for your superiority with the other nations on the day of resurrection.—What, then, is thy counsel, O Wezir? Point out to me what is advisable.—But when the Wezir heard these words, tears poured from his eyes, and he replied, Far be it from me, O King of the age, that I should speak of that which belongeth unto the Compassionate to decide! Dost thou desire that I should enter

the fire of Hell, through the anger of the Almighty King?—Know, O Wezir, rejoined his sovereign, that, if the King purchase a female slave whose rank and lineage are unknown, he will not be acquainted with her ignoble origin that he may abstain from her, or the nobility of her extraction that he may make her his companion: so, if he do this, she may perhaps bear him a son who may be a hypocrite, a tyrant, a shedder of blood; and she may resemble a marshy land, the produce of which is worthless, and attaineth no excellence: her child may be obnoxious to the indignation of his Lord, not doing what He commandeth him, nor refraining from that which He forbiddeth him to do. I will never, therefore, be the means of such an event by purchasing a female slave. I desire, rather, that thou demand in marriage for me one of the daughters of the Kings, whose lineage is known, and whose loveliness is celebrated. If, then, thou wilt point out to me one of good birth and of religion among the daughters of the Muslim Kings, I will demand her as my wife, and marry her in the presence of witnesses, that I may thereby obtain the approval of the Lord of mankind.—The Wezir replied, Verily God hath accomplished thy want and given thee thy desire.—How so? asked the King.—Know, O King, answered the Wezir, that it hath been told me that the King Zahr Shah, the sovereign of El-Ard el-Beyda, hath a daughter of astonishing loveliness, whom words cannot describe, whose equal existeth not in this age, for she is endowed with the most perfect beauty and symmetry, with black eye, and long hair, and slender waist, and large hips; when she approacheth she seduceth, and when she turneth her back she killeth, ravishing the heart and the eye. It is my opinion, therefore, O King, that thou shouldst send to her father an intelligent messenger, well-informed, and experienced in the course of events, that he may courteously ask her in marriage for thee of her father; for she hath no equal in the distant parts of the earth, nor in the near; so shalt thou enjoy her lovely face, and the Glorious King shall approve thy conduct; since it hath been handed down from the Prophet (God bless and save him!) that he said, There is no monkery in El-Islam.

Upon this, the King was perfectly delighted, his bosom expanded with joy, and anxiety and grief departed from him ; and, addressing his Wezir, he said to him, Know, O Wezir, that no one shall go on this business but thou, on account of thy consummate wisdom and politeness : depart, therefore, to thy house, and accomplish what thou hast to do, and prepare thyself by the morrow, and demand for me in marriage this damsel with whom thou hast caused my heart to be engrossed, and return not to me without her. The Wezir replied, I hear and obey :—and he went to his house, and gave orders to bring presents suitable to Kings, consisting of costly jewels and precious rarities, such as were light to carry and of great value, together with Arab horses, and Davidean coats of mail,* and chests of wealth such as language would fail to describe. These they placed upon the mules and camels, and the Wezir departed, accompanied by a hundred memluks and a hundred male black slaves and a hundred female slaves, and the flags and banners were unfurled over his head. The King charged him to return soon ; and after his departure, the King Suleyman Shah burned with desire, and became engrossed with love of the damsel night and day. Meanwhile, the Wezir, by night and by day, traversed the deserts and wastes until there remained between him and the city to which he was repairing one day's journey, when he alighted at the bank of a river, and, having summoned one of his chief officers, ordered him to go quickly to the King Zahr Shah, and to acquaint him with his approach. He answered, I hear and obey :—and went quickly to the city ; and when he arrived there, it happened that the King Zahr Shah was sitting in one of the places of recreation before the gate of the city, and, seeing him as he entered, knew him to be a stranger, and summoned him before him. So when the messenger came to him, he informed him of the approach of the Wezir of the supreme King Suleyman Shah, the King of El-Ard el-Khadra and of the mountains of Ispahan ; and the King Zahr Shah rejoiced, and welcomed the messenger,

* David is said to have been the first who manufactured coats of mail : hence an excellent coat of mail is often called by the Arabs Da'udi, *i.e.* Davidean.

and, having conducted him to his palace, said to him, Where didst thou part from the Wezir? He answered, I parted from him in the morning at the bank of such a river, and to-morrow he will arrive and visit thee: may God continue his favours unto thee, and show mercy unto thy parents! Zahr Shah then ordered one of his wezirs to take with him the greater number of his chief officers and chamberlains and lieutenants and the lords of his court, and to go forth with them to meet him, in honour of the King Suleyman Shah; for his dominion extended through the land.

In the mean time, the Wezir of Suleyman Shah remained where he had halted until midnight, and then proceeded towards the city; and when the morning gleamed, and the sun shone upon the hills and the lowlands, suddenly the Wezir of the King Zahr Shah, and his chamberlains and the lords of his court and the chief officers of his kingdom, approached and joined him at the distance of some leagues from the city. So the Wezir of Suleyman Shah felt sure of the accomplishment of his business, and saluted those who met him; and the latter preceded him until they arrived at the palace of the King, and passed in before him through the entrance to the seventh vestibule. This was the place which no one entered on horseback; for it was near to the King; therefore here the Wezir alighted, and he proceeded on foot until he came to a lofty saloon, at the upper end of which was a couch of alabaster set with pearls and jewels, having four legs of elephants' tusks, and upon it was a mattress covered with green satin embroidered with red gold, and over it was a canopy adorned with pearls and jewels. Upon this couch sat the King Zahr Shah, and the lords of his court stood in attendance upon him. And when the Wezir went in unto him, and stood before him, he composed his heart, and gave liberty to his tongue, and, displaying the oratory of wezirs, and uttering the language of the eloquent, addressed the King with courtesy of manner, and recited a series of complimentary verses; and when he had finished, the King caused him to draw near, treated him with the utmost respect, and, seating him by his side, smiled in his face, and honoured him with a gracious reply. After this, the attendants brought forward the table in that

saloon, and they ate until they were satisfied, when the attendants removed the table, and every one who was present went forth, except the chief officers. When the Wezir, therefore, saw that they had quitted the hall, he rose and stood on his feet, and, complimenting the King, kissed the ground before him, and said, O great King, and dignified sovereign, I have come unto thee and visited thee on an affair productive of peace and prosperity and happiness unto thee; and it is this: I have come to thee as an ambassador to desire in marriage thy daughter, the distinguished by rank and lineage, from the King Suleyman Shah, who is endowed with justice and integrity, and graciousness and beneficence, the King of El-Ard el-Khadra and of the mountains of Ispahan, and he hath sent unto thee many presents and numerous rarities, desiring thine alliance. Dost thou then wish the same of him?—He then stood silent, waiting for the answer; and when the King Zahr Shah heard these words, he rose upon his feet, and modestly kissed the ground; and the persons who were present wondered at the King's condescension to the ambassador, and their minds were amazed. The King then offered up praises unto Him who is possessed of glory and honour, and said, still standing, O exalted Wezir, and illustrious lord, hear what I say: we are, unto the King Suleyman Shah, among the number of his subjects, and shall be ennobled by his affinity: we covet this distinction; and my daughter is one of his handmaids. This is my greatest desire; that he may be a means of support to me, and my reliance.—And he summoned the Kadis and witnesses, and they bore witness that the King Suleyman Shah had appointed his Wezir as his deputy to effect the marriage, and the King Zahr Shah joyfully officiated for his daughter in performing the contract; so the Kadis concluded the marriage-contract, and offered up a prayer for the happiness and prosperity of both parties: after which, the Wezir arose, and produced the presents and precious rarities, and all the gifts that he had brought, and offered the whole to the King Zahr Shah.

The King then occupied himself in fitting out his daughter, and in honourably entertaining the Wezir; and he feasted at his banquets the great and the abject, and

continued the festivity for a period of two months, omitting in it nothing that would rejoice the heart and the eye. And when everything that the bride required was completed, the King gave orders to carry forth the tents, and they were pitched outside the city. They packed the stuffs in the chests, and made ready the Greek and Turkish female slaves ; and the King provided the bride with precious treasures and costly jewels, and made for her a litter of red gold adorned with pearls and jewels, appropriating to her use ten mules for the journey. The litter appeared like a private chamber, and its occupant like one of the beautiful Huriyehs, her canopy resembling one of the pavilions of Paradise. They packed up the treasures and wealth, and placed them upon the mules and camels, and the King Zahr Shah went with them to the distance of three leagues, and then bade farewell to his daughter and the Wezir and his attendants, and returned home in joy and safety.

The Wezir proceeded with the King's daughter, and continued his days' journeys and his route over the wastes, travelling with diligence by night and day, until there remained between him and his country a journey of three days ; whereupon he sent forward a messenger to the King Suleyman Shah to inform him of the approach of the bride. So the messenger hasted in his journey till he arrived in the presence of the King, and acquainted him with the approach of the bride ; and the King was rejoiced, and bestowed a robe of honour upon the messenger, and ordered his troops to go forth in grand procession to meet the bride and her attendants with honour, desiring them to equip themselves in the gayest manner, and to unfurl the standards over their heads. And they complied with his commands ; and a crier proclaimed through the city, that no curtained damsel nor honoured lady nor infirm old woman should fail to go forth to meet the bride. So they all went forth to meet her, and the chief among them accompanied her to serve her. They decided together to conduct her towards night to the King's palace, and the chief officers of the court agreed to decorate the streets, and to stand while the bride passed by them with the eunuchs and female slaves before her, she herself being clad in the dress

which her father gave her. And when she approached, the troops surrounded her, ranged on the right and left, and the litter advanced with her until it drew near to the palace ; and there was no one who did not come forth to see it : the drums were beaten, and the spears brandished, and the trumpets sounded, and sweet odours were diffused around, and the standards flapped, and the horses raced with each other, until they arrived at the gate of the palace, when the pages advanced with the litter to the entrance of the Harim : the palace was illuminated by its splendour, and its walls shone with the lustre of its ornaments ; and at night the eunuchs opened the doors of the inner apartment, and stood surrounding the chief entrance. The bride then came forward among the female slaves, like the moon among the stars, or the chief pearl among the minor pearls of the string, and she entered the apartment, where they had placed for her a couch of alabaster set with pearls and jewels. Upon this she seated herself, and the King came in to visit her, and God inspired his heart with love for her, so that his disquietude and trouble ceased.

He remained with her about a month, after which he went forth and sat upon his throne, and administered justice to his subjects ; and towards daybreak on the morning after the expiration of the ninth month, his wife gave birth to a male child of an auspicious appearance. When the King heard of it, he rejoiced exceedingly, and gave a large sum of money to the bearer of the good tidings ; and in his joy he went to the child, and kissed him between the eyes, wondering at his surpassing beauty. The midwives took him, and blackened the edges of his eyelids with kohl ; and they named him Taj-el-Muluk Kharan. He was nourished on the bosom of indulgence, and reared in the lap of prosperity, and days and years passed until he attained the age of seven years ; whereupon the King Suleyman Shah summoned the men of learning and science, and ordered them to instruct his son in writing and science and polite literature, and they continued to do so for some years, until he had learnt what was requisite ; and when he was acquainted with all that the King desired, he caused him to be brought from the professors and teachers, and engaged for him a master to

instruct him in horsemanship, who continued to teach him until his pupil was fourteen years of age. Whenever the youth went forth on any business, every one who beheld him was ravished by his beauty, so that they composed verses in his praise, and even the women of virtue were overcome by love for him, through the surpassing beauty with which he was endowed. And when he had attained the age of eighteen years, the grey down appeared upon a mole on his red cheek, while another mole, like a globule of ambergris, added to these charms, and he captivated the minds and eyes of his beholders. His comeliness increased as he became a man, and he had companions and friends, and every one who enjoyed access to him wished that Taj-el-Muluk might be Sultan after the death of his father, and that he might himself be one of his emirs.

Now Taj-el-Muluk became addicted to hunting, and would not desist from it for a single hour. His father, the King, used to forbid him this pursuit, fearing, on his account, the perils of the desert and the wild beasts; but he would not receive his warnings. And it came to pass that he said to his servants, Take with you provender for ten days. And they complied with his order; and when he went forth with his followers to the chase, they proceeded over the desert, and continued their course for four days, until they came in sight of a verdant tract, where they beheld wild beasts ranging at large, and trees with ripe fruit, and springs gushing forth; so he said to his followers, Set here the nets, and enlarge their circle, and our place of meeting shall be at the extremity of the circle, at such a spot. They therefore obeyed his commands: they set the nets, and enlarged their circle, and there collected within them an abundance and a variety of wild beasts and gazelles, in such numbers that the wild beasts cried out in fear of them, and threw themselves in the faces of the horses in their attempts to escape. So he urged the dogs and the lynxes and the hawks at them; and they shot the wild beasts with arrows, striking them in mortal places, and they arrived not at the further extremity of the circle without having taken, of the wild beasts, a great number; the rest having fled away. Taj-el-Muluk then alighted at some water, and, having caused the game to be

brought before him, divided it: he appropriated to his father, Suleyman Shah, the best of the beasts, and despatched the portion to him; and some he distributed among the officers of his court.

They passed the night at that place; and in the morning there approached them a great caravan, comprising black slaves and servants and merchants. The caravan halted at the water and the verdant tract; and when Taj-el-Muluk beheld them, he said to one of his companions, Bring me an account of these people, and ask them wherefore they have halted in this place. And when the messenger went to them, he said to them, Inform us who ye are, and return an answer quickly. So they replied, We are merchants, and have halted here for the sake of rest, for the next station is distant from us; and we have halted in this place because we here enjoy tranquillity under the protection of the King Suleyman Shah and his son; for we know that every one who alighteth in his dominions is in safety and peace; and we have some precious stuffs which we have brought on account of his son Taj-el-Muluk. The messenger, therefore, returned to the King's son, and acquainted him with the truth of the matter, informing him of what he had heard from the merchants; and the King's son said, If they have anything which they have brought on my account, I will not enter the city nor remove from this place until I cause it to be displayed before me. He then mounted his horse, and proceeded, his memluks following him, until he drew near to the caravan; and the merchants rose to him, and greeted him with prayers for the divine aid and favour, and the continuance of his glory and his excellencies. A tent of red satin embroidered with pearls and jewels was pitched for him, and they spread for him, over a carpet of silk, a royal carpet, the upper end of which was adorned with emeralds: and Taj-el-Muluk seated himself, and the memluks stood waiting upon him; and he sent to the merchants, commanding them to bring everything that they had with them. So they approached him with their merchandise, and he caused all of it to be displayed before him, and took of it what suited him, and gave them the price.

After this, he mounted, and was about to depart; when,

casting a glance at the caravan, he saw a young man, a comely youth, attired in clean clothes, of elegant person, yith shining forehead and brilliant countenance ; but the charms of this youth had suffered a change, and paleness had overspread him, in consequence of his separation from the objects of his affection ; great was his groaning and lamentation, and, with tears flowing from his eyes, he recited these verses :—

Our separation is protracted, and anxiety and fear are prolonged ;
and tears from my eye, O my friend, are flowing.
I bade farewell to my heart on the day of parting, and now I am
alone, without heart, and without hope.
O my friend, pause with me while I bid her farewell by whose
voice diseases and infirmities would be cured.

Having thus said, he wept a while, and fell down in a swoon, while Taj-el-Muluk looked at him, wondering at his case ; and when he recovered, he stared with a bold look, and again recited some verses, commencing thus :—

Beware of her eye ; for it is enchanting, and none escapeth upon
whom it is cast.

He then uttered a loud sigh, and a second time swooned ; and when Taj-el-Muluk beheld him in this state, he was perplexed at his case, and walked towards him ; and as soon as he recovered from his fit, he saw the King's son standing at his head ; whereupon he rose upon his feet, and kissed the ground before him ; and Taj-el-Muluk said to him, Wherefore hast thou not displayed thy merchandise to us ?—O my lord, he answered, my merchandise compriseth nothing suitable to thy highness. But the King's son said, Thou must positively shew me what thou hast, and acquaint me with thy circumstances ; for I see thee with weeping eye and mourning heart ; and if thou be oppressed, we will put an end to the oppression that thou sufferest ; and if thou be in debt, we will discharge thy debt ; for my heart hath been tormented on thine account since I first beheld thee.

Then Taj-el-Muluk gave orders to place a chair ; and they set for him a chair of ivory and ebony ornamented with reticulated work of gold and silk, and they spread for him a silken carpet ; and Taj-el-Muluk seated himself upon the chair, and commanded the young man to sit upon the carpet, and said to him, Display to me thy merchandise.

The young man replied, O my lord, mention it not unto me ; for my merchandise is not suitable to thee. But Taj-el-Muluk said to him, It must be done :—and ordered some of his pages to bring it : so they brought it in spite of him ; and when the young man beheld it, his tears flowed, and he wept and sighed and lamented, and groans rose from his throat. After again repeating some verses, he opened his merchandise, and displayed it before Taj-el-Muluk, portion by portion and piece by piece, and took forth from among it a garment of satin interwoven with gold, worth two thousand pieces of gold ; and when he opened this, there fell from the midst of it a piece of linen, and the young man, snatching it hastily, put it beneath him, his reason wandering, and thus exclaimed,—

When will the tortured heart be healed by thee ? The constellation of the Pleiades is nearer to me than thou !

Taj-el-Muluk was struck with the utmost wonder at his words, not knowing the cause of them ; and when the young man took the piece of linen, and put it beneath him, Taj-el-Muluk said to him, What is this piece of linen ? He answered, O my lord, thou hast no interest in this. But the King's son said, Shew it to me.—O my lord, he replied, I refrained not from exposing to thee my merchandise but on account of this ; for I cannot allow thee to see it. Taj-el-Muluk, however, said, I must see it :—and he urged him, and was angry. The young man, therefore, took it from beneath his knee, and wept and sighed and lamented exceedingly : so Taj-el-Muluk said to him, I regard thy conduct as not right : acquaint me then with the cause of thy weeping at beholding this piece of linen. And when the young man heard the mention of the piece of linen, he sighed, and said, O my lord, my story is wonderful, and my case is strange with respect to this piece of linen and her to whom it belonged, and her who designed these figures and emblems. He then unfolded the piece of linen ; and lo, in it was the figure of a gazelle worked with silk, and embroidered with red gold, and facing it was the figure of another gazelle worked with silver, and having upon its neck a ring of red gold and three kasabehs * of chrysolite.

* Oblong cylindrical hollow beads.

When Taj-el-Muluk beheld this, and observed the beauty of its execution, he exclaimed, Extolled be the perfection of God, who hath taught man that which he knew not! And his heart was engrossed with desire to hear the story of this young man; so he said to him, Relate to me the story of thyself and of her who was the owner of these gazelles. The young man, therefore, replied,—

THE STORY OF 'AZIZ AND 'AZIZEH

Know, O my lord, that my father was a great merchant, and he was blest with no child but me. I had a cousin (the daughter of a paternal uncle) with whom I was brought up in my father's house; for her father had died, and before his death he had made an agreement with my father that they should marry me to her: so, when I had attained to manhood, and she to womanhood, they did not exclude her from me, nor me from her. My father then spoke to my mother, and said to her, This year we will perform the marriage-contract of 'Aziz and 'Azizeh. And having agreed with my mother to do this, he began to make ready the provisions for the entertainments.

All this was done while I and my cousin were living together without the slightest restraint, and ignorant of the circumstance; and she was more intelligent and more knowing than I. And when my father had made the preparations for the festivity, and nothing remained but the performance of the contract, and my union to my cousin, my father proposed that they should perform the contract after the Friday-prayers: so he repaired to his friends, the merchants and others, and acquainted them with his intention; and my mother went and invited her female friends and relations. And when the Friday came, they washed the saloon which was appropriated to the guests, and cleansed its marble pavement, and spread the carpets in our house, and furnished it with everything that was requisite, after they had decorated its walls with stuffs interwoven

with gold ; the people having agreed to pay their compliments to our family after the Friday-prayers. My father then went and caused sweetmeats and dishes of sugar to be prepared ; and there remained nothing but the performance of the contract. My mother had sent me to the bath, and sent after me a new suit of clothes of the richest description ; and on my coming out from the bath, I put on this handsome suit, which was perfumed ; and when I put it on, a delicious odour was diffused from it, and left a fragrance in the way.

I desired now to repair to the mosque ; but, remembering one of my friends, I returned to search for him, that he might be present at the ceremony of the contract, saying within myself, I will busy me with this affair until the time of prayer draws near. I then entered a by-street which I had never entered before. I was perspiring from the effect of the bath and the new clothes which I wore, and the moisture dropped from me while my perfumes diffused their odour ; so I seated myself at the upper end of the street to take rest upon a mastabah, and spread beneath me an embroidered handkerchief that I had with me. The heat became oppressive to me, and my forehead perspired, and the drops ran down my face, and I could not wipe the moisture from it with my handkerchief because it was spread beneath me : I was therefore about to take the skirt of my farajiyeh to wipe with it my cheek, when suddenly a white handkerchief fell upon me from above. This handkerchief was more delicate to the feel than the zephyr, and the sight of it was more pleasant than restoration to the diseased ; and I took it in my hand, and, raising my head to see whence it had fallen, my eye met the eye of the female who owned these gazelles ; and lo, she was looking out from a lattice in a window of brass. My eye never beheld a person more lovely, and altogether her charms were such as the tongue cannot describe ; and when she saw me looking at her, she put her finger in her mouth, and then united her middle finger and her fore finger, and placed them upon her bosom ; after which, she drew in her head from the window, and shut the lattice and withdrew. A fire had been darted into my heart, and the flame increased ; the sight drew from

me a thousand sighs, and I was perplexed ; for I heard not anything from her, and understood not what she meant by her signs. I looked again towards the window ; but found it closed : and I waited until sunset ; but heard no sound, nor saw any person ; so, despairing of seeing her again, I rose from my place, and took the handkerchief with me. I opened it, and the odour of musk was diffused from it, and I was so exhilarated by the scent that I seemed as if I were in paradise. I then spread it before me ; whereupon there fell from it a piece of delicate paper, and, opening this, I found it richly perfumed with exquisite scents, and inscribed with these verses :—

I sent a letter to complain to him of the pain of my passion, in a delicate handwriting (for handwritings are various) ;

So my beloved said, Wherefore is thy writing thus delicate and minute, so as scarce to be discernible ?

I answered, Because I am wasted and attenuated : so, therefore, should the writing of lovers be.

After this, I cast a glance at the beauty of the handkerchief, and beheld an amatory couplet worked upon one of its two borders,* and another, of a similar kind, on its other border.

When I saw these verses upon the handkerchief, a flame of fire shot into my heart, and my desire and perplexity increased ; and I took the handkerchief and the paper, and went with them to the house, not knowing any means of obtaining what I desired, and incapable of discovering how to proceed properly in my love. I arrived not at the house until a considerable portion of the night had elapsed, and beheld my cousin sitting weeping ; but when she saw me, she wiped away her tears, and approached me, and took off from me my outer clothes, and asked me the cause of my absence. She told me that all the people, the emirs and grandees, and merchants and others, had assembled in our house, and the Kadi and the witnesses had come, and they ate the repast, and remained a considerable while sitting in expectation of my presence for the purpose of performing the marriage-contract, and when they despaired of my coming, they

* The handkerchief is generally oblong, and each of its two ends is embroidered with a border of coloured silks and gold ; the other two edges being plain.

dispersed and went their ways.—Thy father, said she, was violently enraged on account of this, and swore that he would not perform our marriage-contract until next year; for he hath expended upon this festivity a large sum of money. What, she added, hath happened unto thee this day, that thou hast delayed thy return until now, and that this hath happened on account of thine absence?

I answered her, Such and such things have happened to me:—and mentioned to her the handkerchief, acquainting her with the affair from first to last: and she took the paper and the handkerchief, and read what was upon them, and her tears ran down upon her cheeks; and she asked me, What did she say to thee, and of what did she make signs to thee? I answered, She uttered not a word; but put her finger in her mouth, and then united it with the middle finger, and placed both fingers upon her bosom, and pointed to the ground: then she drew in her head, and closed the lattice, and I saw her not afterwards. She carried off my heart with her, and I sat until sunset in expectation of her looking out from the lattice a second time; but she did it not; and when I despaired of seeing her again, I rose from the place. This is my story; and I beg of thee to aid me in the trouble in which I am involved.—Upon this, she raised her head towards me, and said, O son of my uncle, if thou requiredst mine eye, I would pull it out for thee from my eyelids; and I must assist thee in the accomplishment of thy desire, and assist her in like manner; for she is overwhelmed by love for thee, as thou art by love for her.—And what, said I, is the interpretation of the signs which she made?—Her putting her finger in her mouth, she answered, indicateth that thou art in her estimation as her soul to her body, and that she longeth for thy union with her; and as to the handkerchief, it is a signal of the lover's salutation to the beloved; and the paper denoteth that her soul is captivated by thee; and as to her putting her two fingers upon her bosom, the meaning of it is as though she said to thee, After two days come hither, that my affliction may be dissipated by thy countenance. And know, O son of my uncle, she continued, that she loveth thee and confideth in thee. This is my interpretation of her signs; and

if I had liberty to go in and out at pleasure, I would effect thy union with her in the shortest time, and protect you both with my skirt.—When I heard these words from her, said the young man, I thanked her for what she had said, and I said within myself, I will wait two days. I then remained two days in the house, neither going out nor coming in, nor eating nor drinking. I put my head in the lap of my cousin ; and she cheered me by her conversation, and said to me, Be resolute and of good heart, and dress thyself, and repair to her at the time appointed. And she arose, and changed my clothes, and perfumed me with incense.

I then braced up my nerves, and fortified my heart, and went forth, and proceeded until I entered the by-street, and after I had sat a while upon the mastabah, lo, the lattice opened. I looked towards the damsel, and when I saw her I fell down in a swoon : then recovering, I summoned resolution, and took heart, and looked at her a second time ; but again I became insensible ; and when I recovered, I saw with her a mirror and a red handkerchief. Observing me now, she tucked up her sleeves from her fore arms, and, opening her five fingers, struck her bosom with them (with the palm and the five fingers) : next she raised her hands, and held forth the mirror from the lattice, and took the red handkerchief, and retired with it ; after which she returned, and let it down from the lattice towards the street three times, letting it down and raising it, and then wringing it and twisting it with her hand, and bending down her head : she then drew it in through the lattice, and closed the lattice, and departed, without speaking to me one word, but leaving me in perplexity, not knowing to what she alluded. I remained sitting there until the hour of nightfall, and went home near midnight.

I found my cousin with her hand placed to her cheek, and her eyelids pouring forth tears ; and upon this, my anxieties and griefs increased, and I fell down in a corner of the chamber ; but she sprang towards me, and lifted me up, and, having taken off from me my outer clothes, wiped my face with her sleeve, and asked me what had happened to me. I related to her, therefore, all that had happened on the part of the damsel : and she said to me, O son of my

uncle, as to her sign with her hand and five fingers, its interpretation is, Come hither after five days:—and as to her sign with the mirror, and her putting forth her head from the lattice [and her actions with the red handkerchief], the meaning is, Seat thyself at the shop of the dyer until my messenger shall come to thee.—When I heard her words, fire burned in my heart, and I replied, By Allah, O daughter of my uncle, thou sayest truly in this interpretation; for I saw in the by-street a Jewish dyer. I then wept, and my cousin said, Be resolute, and firm of heart; for others than thou are troubled with love for a period of years, and contend with the fierceness of passion, while thou hast but a week to endure: wherefore then should this impatience overcome thee? And she proceeded to cheer me with her conversation, and brought me food; and I took a morsel, and would have eaten it; but I could not. I abstained from drink and food, and renounced the delights of sleep, and my complexion became pallid, and my charms became changed; for I had never known love before that, nor tasted the fervency of that passion before; and I fell sick, and my cousin became sick on my account. She occupied herself in relating to me the sufferings of lovers, in order to enliven me, until I fell asleep; and I used to awake, and find her sleepless on my account, with her tears flowing upon her cheeks; and thus I remained until the five days had passed, when my cousin arose and heated some water for me, and bathed me with it, and dressed me, and said to me, Repair to her, and may Allah accomplish thy wish, and grant thee what thou desirest of thy beloved.

So I went, and walked on until I came to the upper end of the by-street, and that day was Saturday; so I found the shop of the dyer shut: and I sat there till the call to afternoon-prayers; and the sun became yellow, and the call to evening-prayers was chanted; and night commenced, and I saw no trace of her, nor heard a voice, nor received any message: I therefore feared for myself, sitting alone; and I rose and walked away, like one intoxicated, until I entered the house.

There, on going in, I beheld my cousin 'Azizeh with one of her hands holding a peg knocked into the wall, and

her other hand upon her bosom ; and she was groaning, and reciting verses ; but when she had finished her recitation, she turned her eyes towards me, and beheld me ; whereupon she wiped away her tears and mine with her sleeve, and, smiling in my face, said to me, O son of my uncle, Allah grant thee enjoyment of that which He hath given thee ! Wherefore hast thou not visited thy beloved this night ?— And when I heard her words, I kicked her with my foot upon her bosom, and she fell down upon the raised floor, and there was a peg there, and it wounded her forehead. On looking at her I saw that her forehead was cut open, and her blood was flowing ; yet she was silent, and uttered not a single letter ; but rose immediately, and burned some tinder of rags, and, having closed with it the wound, tied a bandage round her head, and wiped away the blood that had flowed upon the carpet ; and it was as though this accident had not occurred. She then came to me, and, smiling in my face, said to me with a gentle voice, By Allah, O son of my uncle, I said not this to make a jest of thee or of her. I was troubled just now by the aching of my head, and with wiping away the blood : but at the present moment the pain of my head is alleviated, and that of my forehead : tell me therefore what hath happened to thee this day.—So I related to her all that had befallen me through the conduct of that damsel on this day ; and after I had done so I wept ; but she said to me, Rejoice at the announcement of the success of thy desire, and the accomplishment of thy hope. Verily this is a sign of acceptance : for she absented herself from thee because she desireth to try thee, and to know whether thou art patient or not, and whether thou art sincere in thy love of her or not. To-morrow go to her, and station thyself at thy first place, and see what sign she will make to thee ; for thy happiness is near, and thy sorrow is dissipated.—And she proceeded to console me ; but I ceased not to increase in anxiety and grief. She then placed the food before me ; but I kicked it with my foot, and the contents of each saucer were scattered about ; and I said, Every one who is in love is insane, and inclineth not to food, nor findeth pleasure in sleep.—By Allah, O son of my uncle, exclaimed my cousin 'Azizeh, these are indeed symptoms of

love ! And her tears flowed, and she gathered together the fragments of the saucers, and wiped up the food that was spilt, and sat chatting to me, while I prayed to God that He would hasten the morning.

And when the morning came, and diffused its light, I repaired to the damsel, and entered hastily the by-street, where I seated myself upon the mastabah before mentioned ; and lo, the window was opened, and she put forth her head from it, laughing. She then retired, and returned bringing a mirror, and a bag, and a pot filled with green plants, and having also in her hand a lamp : and the first thing that she did was this : she took the mirror in her hand, and put it into the bag : then she tied it up and threw it back into the chamber. After this, she let down her hair over her face, and put the lamp upon the top of the green plants for a moment, and then took all these things and departed with them, and closed the lattice. My heart was riven by her secret signs and her obscure intimations, for she addressed me not with a single word, and my passion grew more violent thereat, and my excitement and distraction increased.

I retraced my steps with weeping eye and sorrowful heart until I entered the house, where I saw my cousin sitting with her face to the wall : her heart was burning with anxiety and grief and jealousy ; but her affection prevented her from acquainting me at all with the passion which she felt on witnessing my excessive love and distraction. I then looked at her again, and saw that she had, on her head, two bandages : one of them was on account of the accident that had happened to her forehead, and the other was upon her eye, on account of a pain that she suffered in consequence of the violence of her weeping. She was in a most miserable case, weeping, and reciting these verses :—

Wherever thou be, mayst thou be in safety, O thou who departest,
and yet dwellest in my heart !

May God be near thee wherever thou goest, to deliver thee from
vicissitudes and from misfortunes !

Thou hast gone, and mine eye is cheerless through thine absence,
and my tears are flowing—O how abundantly !

And when she had ended her recitation, she looked towards me and saw me as she wept, and she wiped away her tears,

and rose to me ; but she could not speak, from the excessive love with which she was affected, and she remained for some time silent ; after which, she said to me, O son of my uncle, tell me what thou hast experienced from her on this occasion. And I told her all that had happened to me ; whereupon she said to me, Be patient ; for the time of thy union is come, and thou hast attained the object of thy hopes. As to the sign that she made to thee with the mirror, and her putting it into the bag, it is equivalent to her saying to thee, Wait until the sun shall have set :—and as to her letting fall her hair over her face, it implieth her saying to thee, When night cometh, and letteth fall its black shade over the light of day, come hither :—and the sign that she made to thee with the pot containing the plants meant that she would say to thee, When thou comest, enter the garden that is behind the by-street :—and the sign which she made to thee with the lamp denoted her saying to thee, When thou enterest the garden, to the place where thou findest the lighted lamp do thou repair, and seat thyself beneath it, and there wait for me ; for the love of thee destroyeth me.—But when I heard these words of my cousin, I cried out from the excess of my passion, and said, How many times dost thou promise me, and I go to her and attain not my desire, nor find a true meaning to thine interpretation ? And upon this, my cousin laughed, and replied, It remaineth for thee to have patience during the rest of this day, until the daylight is gone, and the night cometh with its deep darkness, and then shalt thou enjoy thy union and the accomplishment of thy hopes ; and these words are true, without any falsehood. She then drew near to me, and comforted me with soft words, but dared not bring me any food, fearing that I should be angry with her, and hoping that I might incline to her with favour : she only came to me, and took off my outer clothes : after which she said to me, O son of my uncle, sit with me that I may converse with thee to amuse thee until the close of the day, and, if it be the will of God, the night shall not come without thy being in the company of thy beloved. But I took no notice of her, waiting for the night, and saying, O Allah, hasten the coming of the night ! And when it arrived, my

cousin wept violently, and gave me a grain of pure musk, saying to me, O son of my uncle, put this grain in thy mouth, and when thou hast met thy beloved, and she hath accepted thy suit, recite to her this verse:—

O ye lovers, by Allah, inform me, how a youth should act when his love is intense.

She then kissed me, and desired me to swear that I would not recite this verse until my departure from the damsel; and I replied, I hear and obey.

I went forth at the hour of nightfall, and proceeded until I came to the garden. I found its gate open, and entered, and beheld a light in the distance; so I advanced towards it, and when I arrived at it, I found there a large mak'ad,* over which was constructed a dome of ivory and ebony, and the lamp was suspended in the midst of the dome. The mak'ad was furnished with silken carpets embroidered with gold and silver; and there was a great lighted candle in a candlestick of gold beneath the lamp: in the midst of the chamber was a fountain ornamented with various designs: by the side of this fountain was a table of viands covered with a silk napkin, near which was a large china bottle full of wine, with a cup of crystal adorned with gilding; and by the side of all these things was a great tray of silver, covered over. I uncovered it, and beheld in it a variety of fruits, such as figs and pomegranates and grapes and oranges and citrons of different kinds, together with various flowers, as roses and jasmine and myrtle and eglantine and narcissus, and all kinds of sweet scents. I was astonished at this place, and affected with the utmost delight, and my anxiety and grief were dissipated; but I found not in this abode any being of the creatures of God (whose name be exalted!); not even a male or female slave did I see, nor the person who thus neglected these things. I sat in this chamber, waiting for the coming of the beloved of my heart, until the first hour of the night had passed, and the second hour, and the third; but she came not; and hunger began to torment me violently, for a long time had

* Guest-room, looking through open arches into the court or garden, and raised ten or more feet above the ground.

elapsed without my eating food, through the excess of my passion; but when I beheld this place, and my cousin's correct understanding of the signs made by my beloved became manifest to me, I felt at ease; yet I still experienced the torment of hunger, and the savoury odours of the food upon the table had excited my desire on my arrival there. Feeling secure, therefore, of the attainment of my object, and longing to eat, I approached the table, and took off the cover, and found in the midst of it a dish of china containing four fricandoed fowls seasoned with spices, around which were four saucers; one containing sweetmeats; and another, conserve of pomegranate-grains; and a third, baklaweh *; and the fourth, kataif: the contents of these saucers consisting both of sweet and acid. So I ate of the kataif, and a piece of meat, and I put my hand to the baklaweh and ate of it as much as was agreeable, and then turned to the sweetmeat and ate a spoonful, or two, or three, or four, and I ate a portion of a fowl, and a morsel of another dish: and when I had done this, my stomach was full, and my joints became loose, and I was too lazy to remain awake; so I laid my head upon a cushion, after I had washed my hands, and sleep overcame me, and I knew not what happened to me after this. I awoke not until the sun scorched me (for some days had passed without my having tasted sleep); and when I awoke, I found upon my stomach some salt and charcoal; and I stood up and shook my clothes, and looked to the right and left, but found no one: I discovered that I had been sleeping upon the marble pavement without anything spread beneath me, and I was perplexed in my mind, and mourned greatly; my tears ran down upon my cheeks, and I lamented for myself.

* A kind of pastry, which is generally thus prepared: A paste made of fine flour with clarified butter is rolled thin, and laid upon a tray: upon this paste is then spread a composition of clarified butter and blanched almonds (and sometimes walnuts and currants) beaten small; and over this is put another layer of paste. Eight of these double layers of paste with the composition above mentioned between them are placed one upon another, making the whole about an inch thick. It is baked in an oven; cut into lozenge-shaped pieces, about three inches long, and two inches wide; and after it is thus cut, some honey or treacle is poured over.

I then returned to the house, and when I arrived there I found my cousin striking her hand upon her bosom, and weeping with tears like raining clouds ; but when she beheld me she arose quickly, and wiped away her tears, and, addressing me with her soft speech, said to me, O son of my uncle, God hath been gracious to thee in thy passion, since the person whom thou lovest loveth thee, while *I* remain weeping and mourning for the separation of thee who findest fault with me ; but may God not chastise thee on my account ! She then smiled in my face with the smile of one in anger, and caressed me, and took off my outer clothes, and spread them out, and said, By Allah, these are not the odours of one who hath enjoyed the company of his beloved ! Tell me, then, what hath happened to thee, O son of my uncle.—And I told her all that had befallen me ; whereupon she smiled a second time with the smile of one in anger, and said, Verily, my heart is full and in pain ! But may the person who paineth thy heart cease to exist ! This woman maketh herself extravagantly difficult to thee. By Allah, O son of my uncle, I fear what she may do to thee. Know that the meaning of the salt is, Thou art drowned in sleep, and seemest insipid, so that the soul regardeth thee with loathing, and thou requirest to be salted, that the stomach may not eject thee : thou pretendest that thou art of the number of generous lovers ; but sleep, unto lovers, is forbidden ; and thy pretension to love is false.—Such, however, is her pretension : her love for thee is false, for when she saw thee sleeping she did not rouse thee ; and had her love for thee been true she would have roused thee.—And as to the charcoal, the meaning indicated by it is, May God blacken thy face, since thou hast made false pretensions to love, when thou art only a child, and hast no care but for eating and drinking and sleeping. This is the interpretation of her sign ; and may Allah (whose name be exalted !) deliver thee from her.—Now when I heard what she said, I struck my hand upon my breast, and exclaimed, By Allah, this is the truth ; for I slept ; and lovers sleep not : so I have wronged mine own self. What could have been more injurious to me than eating and sleeping ? And what is to be done ?—I then wept exceedingly, and said to my cousin,

Direct me what to do, and have mercy upon me; so may God have mercy upon thee; otherwise I shall die. My cousin, therefore, having a very great love for me, replied, On my head and my eye! But, O son of my uncle, I have told thee several times that, if I had the privilege of coming in and going out when I pleased, I would accomplish thy union with her in the shortest time, and cover you both with my skirt; and this I would not do but from the desire of obtaining thine approval. If God permit, I will employ my utmost endeavours to bring you together; but hear my words, and comply with my directions, and go to that same place, and seat thyself there: when the hour of nightfall is come, seat thyself in the place where thou wast, and beware of eating anything; for eating induceth sleep: have a care then that thou sleep not; for she will not come to thee until a quarter of the night hath passed: and may God avert from thee her wickedness!—So, when I heard her words, I rejoiced, and prayed God to hasten the night; and when night came, I desired to depart; and my cousin said to me, When thou hast met her, repeat to her the verse before mentioned, at the time of thy departure. I replied, On the head and the eye.

And when I went forth and repaired to the garden, I found the place prepared, in the same state in which I had seen it before; in it was everything requisite, of food and drink and dried fruits and sweet scents and other things; and I went up into the mak'ad, and, smelling the odour of the food, I longed for it. I refrained from it several times; but at length I could not withstand it: so I arose and went to the table, and took off its cover, and found a dish of fowls, around which were four saucers of food of four different kinds; and I ate of each kind a morsel, and as much as was agreeable of the sweetmeat, and a piece of meat, and drank some zardeh,* and, finding it pleasant to me, I drank again of it plentifully by the spoonful until I was sated and my stomach was full. And after this, my eyelids closed; so I took a pillow and put it beneath my head, saying, Perhaps I may recline upon it without sleeping. But I closed my eyes and slept, and awoke not until

* A sweet drink infused with saffron.

the sun had risen, when I found upon my stomach a play-bone and a tab-stick* and a date-stone and a locust-seed ; and there was no furniture nor anything else in the place, and it seemed as if nothing had been there on the preceding night.

I rose, and shook off all these things from me, and went forth enraged, and, arriving at the house, I found my cousin groaning ; and I chid her and abused her ; whereupon she wept, and, having wiped away her tears, approached and kissed me, and pressed me to her bosom ; but I drew back from her, blaming myself. She then said to me, O son of my uncle, it seemeth that thou hast slept again this last night. I replied, Yes ; and when I awoke I found a play-bone laid upon my stomach, and a tab-stick and a date-stone and a locust-seed ; and I know not wherefore she did this. Then I wept, and approached her, and said to her, Explain to me the meaning of her doing this, and tell me how I shall act, and assist me in my trouble. She replied, On the head and the eye. As to the tab-stick [and the play-bone], which she placed upon thy stomach, she meaneth thereby, that thou camest there and thy heart was absent ; as though she would say to thee, Love is not thus ; therefore reckon not thyself among lovers. And as to the date-stone,† she indicated by it, that, if thou wert a lover, thy heart had been burning with passion, and thou wouldest not taste the delight of sleep ; for the sweetness of love is like a date, which kindleth a fire in the heart. And as to the locust-seed, she intimated to thee by it, that the heart of the lover is fatigued ; and she would say to thee thereby, Endure our separation with the patience of Job.—When I heard this interpretation, fire darted into my heart, and my grief increased, and I cried out and exclaimed, God had decreed that I should sleep, on account of my little fortune ! I then said to her, O daughter of my uncle, by my life I conjure thee to contrive for me some stratagem by means of which I may obtain an interview with her. And I wept.—O 'Aziz, O son of my uncle, she replied, verily my heart is full of thoughts, and I cannot talk ; but go thou to-night to that place, and

* For the game of tab, see *Modern Egyptians*, ch. xvii.

† The word for date-stone also means "distance" or "absence."

beware of sleeping, and so shalt thou attain thy desire. This is my counsel, and peace be on thee.—I said, If it please God, I will not sleep; but I will do as thou chargest me. And my cousin arose, and brought me food, saying to me, Eat now what will satisfy thee, that thou mayest have no desire remaining. So I ate what satisfied me: and when night came, my cousin arose, and brought me a superb suit of clothing, and clad me with it, and conjured me to repeat to the damsel the verse before mentioned, and cautioned me against sleeping.

I then departed from her, and, having repaired to the garden, went up into the mak'ad; and I gazed at the garden, and kept opening my eyes with my fingers, and shaking my head, as the night grew dark. But I became hungry from watching, and the odours of the food were wafted towards me, and my hunger in consequence increased: so I went to the table, and removed its cover, and ate a morsel of every dish, and a piece of meat, and I went to the bottle of wine, saying within myself, I will drink a cup:—and I drank it, and then drank the second, and the third, and so on to the number of ten; and being already stricken by love, I fell upon the floor as one slain. Thus I remained until day came, and I awoke, and found myself outside the garden, with a large sharp knife upon my stomach, and an iron dirhem; * and I trembled with fear, and took them with me and returned to the house.

I found my cousin saying, I am in this house wretched and sorrowful, with no relief but weeping. And as I entered, I fell down prostrate, throwing the knife and dirhem from my hand, and fainted; and when I recovered, I acquainted her with that which had befallen me, and said to her, I shall not attain my desire. Her grief increased at witnessing my weeping and my excessive passion, and she said to me, I have failed of success in cautioning thee against sleeping; for thou wouldest not attend to my advice: my words profit thee nothing. But I replied, I conjure thee by Allah that thou explain to me the meaning of the knife and the iron dirhem. So she said, As to the dirhem, she alluded by it

* A dirhem is not only a silver coin of about 48 grs., but its weight.

to her right eye, and intimated that she swore by it, and said, By the Lord of all creatures, and by my right eye, if thou come again and sleep I will assuredly slaughter thee with this knife!—I fear for thee, therefore, O son of my uncle, from her malice; and my heart is full of grief on thine account, and I cannot talk. If, then, thou art confident in thyself that, if thou return to her, thou wilt not sleep, return to her, and beware of sleeping, and so shalt thou attain thy desire; but if thou know that, shouldst thou go to her again, thou wilt sleep as usual, and so go to her and sleep, she will slaughter thee.—What then, said I, is to be done, O daughter of my uncle? I conjure thee by Allah to help me in this affliction.—She replied, On my head and my eye: and if thou attend to my words and comply with my directions thou wilt accomplish thy desire. I said, I will do so. And she rejoined, When the time of departure cometh I will tell thee. She then pressed me to her bosom, and laid me on the bed, and continued gently kneading my limbs until slumber overcame me, and I sank into sleep; and she took a fan, and, seating herself at my head, fanned my face until the close of day, when she roused me; and on my awaking, I found her at my head with the fan in her hand, and weeping so that her tears had wetted her clothes. But when she saw me that I had awoke, she wiped away her tears, and brought me some food. I refrained from it; but she said to me, Did I not tell thee that thou must attend to my directions? Eat, therefore.—So I ate, and would not oppose her; and she proceeded to put the food into my mouth, while I chewed it, until my stomach was full. She then gave me to drink some infusion of jujubes with sugar, and washed my hands, and dried them with a handkerchief, and sprinkled some rose-water upon me; after which I sat with her, in healthy frame; and when the night became dark, she put on me my clothes, and said, O son of my uncle, watch all night, and sleep not; for she will not come to thee this night until near its close; and, if it be the will of God, thou shalt meet her this night; but forget not my charge. Then she wept, and my heart was pained for her, on account of her excessive weeping; and I said to her, What is the charge which thou gavest me? She answered,

When thou departest from her, repeat to her the verse before mentioned.

I then went forth from her full of joy, and proceeded to the garden, and went up to the mak'ad, satiated with food. I remained sleepless a quarter of the night, and the night seemed as long to me as though it were a year ; and I continued watching until two thirds of it had passed, and the cocks crew, and I became violently hungry from watching : so I went up to the table, and ate until I was satisfied ; and my head became heavy, and I desired to sleep ; but suddenly I heard a noise in the distance ; whereupon I arose, and washed my hands and mouth, and roused myself ; and soon after, she came. She was accompanied by ten female slaves, and she appeared among them like the full moon among the planets : she was attired in a garment of green satin embroidered with red gold ; and when she saw me, she laughed, and said, How is it that thou hast remained awake, and that sleep hath not overcome thee ? Now that thou hast passed the night sleepless I am convinced that thou art a lover ; for among the characteristics of lovers is the watching by night in the resolute endurance of desire.—She then turned towards her female slaves, and made a sign to them ; whereupon they departed from her ; and she approached me, and pressed me to her bosom, and kissed me, and we conversed together until the morning, when I desired to depart ; but she held me, and said to me, Stop, that I may acquaint thee with something, and give thee a charge.—So I stopped ; and she unfolded a handkerchief, and, taking forth from it this piece of linen, spread it open before me ; and I found in it the design of the gazelles, as thou seest, and I admired it exceedingly, and took it ; after which I made a promise to her that I would pay her a visit every night in that garden, and departed from her, full of joy ; but in my joy I forgot the verse which my cousin had charged me to repeat. And when she gave me the piece of linen containing the design of the gazelles, she said to me, This is the work of my sister.—And what, said I, is the name of thy sister ? She answered, Her name is Nur-el-Huda : and do thou take care of this piece of linen.

After this, when I had taken leave of her and departed,

full of joy, I returned and went in to my cousin, and found her lying down, and when she saw me she rose, her tears dropping, and approached me, and, kissing my bosom, said, Hast thou recited the verse as I charged thee? I answered, I forgot it; and nothing drove it from my mind but the design of these gazelles. And I threw down the piece of linen before her. She arose, and then seated herself again, and, in her impatience, shed tears, and said, O son of my uncle, make a present to me of this piece of linen. So I gave it her, and she took it and spread it open, and saw what was in it. And when the time of my departure came, she said, Go, and may safety attend thee; but when thou retirest from her, recite to her the verse that I taught thee before, and which thou didst forget.—Repeat it to me, said I. And she did so.

I then repaired to the garden, and entered the mak'ad. I found the damsel waiting for me, and when she beheld me she arose and kissed me and seated me, and we ate and drank, and in the morning I repeated to her the verse, which was this:—

O ye lovers, by Allah, inform me, how a youth should act when his love is intense.

And when she heard it, her eyes filled with tears, and thus she replied:—

He should hide his love, and conceal his secret, and be patient under every event, and submissive.

I committed this to memory, and, glad at having done what my cousin desired, went forth and returned to her. I found her lying down, with my mother, at her head, weeping for her unhappy state; and when I went in to her, my mother said to me, Perdition to such a cousin as thou! How canst thou leave the daughter of thine uncle indisposed and not inquire respecting her disease?—But my cousin, on beholding me, raised her head, and sat up, and said to me, O 'Aziz, hast thou repeated to her the verse that I taught thee? I answered, Yes: and when she heard it, she wept, and recited to me another verse, which I retain in my memory.—Let me hear it, said my cousin. And when I

had repeated it to her she wept violently, and recited this other verse :—

He hath sought to attain a becoming patience ; but found nought save a heart pining with desire.

She then said to me, When thou goest to her as usual, repeat to her this verse which thou hast heard. I replied, I hear and obey.

So I went to the garden according to my custom, and when I was about to return, I recited to the damsel that verse ; and when she heard it, tears poured from her eyes, and she replied,—

Then, if he have not patience to conceal his secret, I know nothing better for him than death.

Retaining this in my memory, I returned to the house ; and when I went in to my cousin, I found her fallen down in a fit, and my mother sitting at her head ; and when my cousin heard my voice, she opened her eyes, and said, O 'Aziz, hast thou repeated to her the verse ? I answered, Yes : and when she heard it, she wept, and recited to me this other verse. And I repeated it to her ; and as soon as she heard it she fainted again, and, on her recovering, recited another verse, which was this :—

We hear and obey, and we die ; then convey my salutation to the person who hath prevented our union.

At the approach of the following night I went again to the garden as usual, and found the damsel expecting me ; and we ate and drank ; and in the morning, when I was about to depart, I repeated to her what my cousin had said ; whereupon she uttered a loud cry, and was agitated, and exclaimed, By Allah, she who uttered this verse hath died ! She then wept, and said to me, Wo to thee ! Is not she who uttered this verse related to thee ?—I answered, She is the daughter of my paternal uncle.—Thou liest, replied she : by Allah, if she were the daughter of thy uncle thou hadst borne her the same love that she bore thee. Thou art he who hath destroyed her, and may God destroy thee in like manner ! By Allah, if thou hadst told me of thy

having a cousin, I had not admitted thee into my favour.—Verily, said I, she is my cousin, and she explained to me the signs that thou madest me, and it was she who taught me how to proceed with thee: I had not obtained access to thee but through her good management.—And did she know of our affair? said she. I answered, Yes.—May Allah, she exclaimed, cause thee to bewail thy youth, as thou hast caused her to bewail hers! She then said to me, Go and see her.

I departed, therefore, troubled in mind, and proceeded until I came to our street, when I heard a wailing, and, asking respecting it, was answered, We found 'Azizeh lying behind the door, dead. I entered the house, and when my mother beheld me, she exclaimed, The crime of destroying her is on thy neck, and may God not pardon thee her blood! Perdition to such a cousin as thou!—My father then came, and we prepared her body for interment, and performed the funeral-ceremonies, and buried her; and we caused recitations of the whole of the Kur'an to be performed at her tomb, and remained there three days, after which I returned to the house, sorrowing for her. And my mother addressed me, and said, I desire to know what thou didst to her, so that thou brokest her heart. I asked her continually, O my son, respecting the cause of her disorder; but she would not acquaint me with it. I conjure thee, therefore, by Allah, that thou inform me what thou didst unto her, to cause her death.—I replied, I did nothing. But she said, May God avenge her upon thee! for she mentioned to me nothing, but concealed the truth of her case until she died, still preserving her affection for thee; and when she died I was with her, and she opened her eyes, and said to me, O wife of my uncle, may God hold thy son guiltless of my blood, and not punish him for that which he hath done unto me; and now God transporteth me from the perishable world to the world of eternity. And I replied, O my daughter, may God preserve thee, and preserve thy youth! And I asked her respecting the cause of her disorder: but she answered not. Then she smiled, and said, O wife of my uncle, if thy son desire to go to the place which he is accustomed to frequent, tell him to repeat these two phrases on departing

from it :—Fidelity is good, and treachery is base :—and this I desire in my compassion for him, that I may shew him compassion in my life and after my death. She then gave me something for thee, and took an oath of me that I would not give it to thee until I should see thee weeping for her and lamenting: this thing I have, and when I see thee in the state that she hath described I will give it to thee.—I said to her, Shew it me. But she would not.

I then gave myself up to my pleasures, and thought not of the death of my cousin; for I was unsettled in mind, and wished that I were passing the whole of every night and day with my beloved; and scarcely had the next night approached when I repaired again to the garden. I found the damsel sitting there, burning with impatience to see me; and as soon as she beheld me, she hastened to me and clung to my neck, and asked me respecting my cousin. I answered her, She is dead, and we have performed zikrs and recitations of the Kur'an for her, and four nights have passed since her death, and this is the fifth. When she heard this, she cried out and wept, and said, Did I not tell thee that thou hadst killed her? Hadst thou informed me of her, before her death, I had requited her for the kindness that she hath shewn me; for she hath been of service to me in giving thee access to me: had it not been for her, I should not have had an interview with thee, and I fear thou wilt fall into a calamity on account of her disaster.—I replied, She acquitted me before her death. And I related to her what my mother had told me; upon which she exclaimed, By Allah, I conjure thee, when thou goest to thy mother, learn what it is that she hath.—My mother, said I, told me, Thy cousin, before she died, charged me saying, If thy son desire to go to the place which he is accustomed to frequent, tell him to repeat these two phrases :—Fidelity is good, and treachery is base.—And when the damsel heard this, she exclaimed, The mercy of God (whose name be exalted!) be upon her, for she hath saved thee from me: I was meditating an injury to thee; but now I will not hurt thee nor trouble thee. And I wondered at this, and said to her, What didst thou purpose before this to do to me, after mutual love had taken place between us? She answered,

Thou art devoted to me ; but thou art young, and thy mind is free from deceit, and thou knowest not our malice nor our deceit : were she still in the bonds of life, she would assist thee ; for she is the cause of thy safety, and hath delivered thee from destruction : and now I charge thee that thou speak not with any female, nor answer any of our sex, young or old. Beware, beware ; for thou art ignorant of the deceit of women, and their malice : she who used to interpret the signs to thee is dead ; and I fear for thee lest thou fall into a calamity and find none to deliver thee from it after the death of thy cousin. O my sorrow for the daughter of thy uncle ! Would that I had known her before her death, that I might have requited her for the kindness that she hath done me ! The mercy of God (whose name be exalted !) be upon her, for she concealed her secret, and revealed not what she felt ; and but for her, thou wouldest never have had access to me. And now I have a service to demand of thee.—What is it ? said I. She answered, That thou conduct me to her tomb, that I may visit her at her grave, and inscribe some verses upon it. I replied, To-morrow, if it be the will of God, whose name be exalted !—So I remained with her that night, and frequently she said to me, Would that thou hadst told me of thy cousin before her death ! And I asked her, What is the meaning of these words which she said—Fidelity is good, and treachery is base ? But she answered me not.

In the morning, therefore, she arose, and, taking a purse containing some pieces of gold, said to me, Arise, and shew me the tomb, that I may visit it, and write upon it some verses, and build over it a cupola, and pray for mercy upon her, and bestow these pieces of gold in alms for her soul. I replied, I hear and obey. And I walked before her, and she followed me, and employed herself in giving alms on the way as she went, and every time that she did so she said, This is an alms for the soul of 'Azizeh, who concealed her secret until she drank the cup of death, and revealed not her love. Thus she continued to give of the contents of the purse, and to say, For the soul of 'Azizeh,—until we arrived at the tomb, and the contents of the purse were exhausted ; and when she beheld the tomb, she threw herself upon it, and wept violently. She then took forth a

pointed instrument of steel, and a small mallet, and engraved upon the stone at the head of the tomb, in small characters, these verses :—

I passed by an undistinguished tomb in the midst of a garden,
with seven anemones upon it ;
And I said, Whose tomb is this ? The soil answered, Be respectful, for this is the resting-place of a lover.
So I said, God keep thee, O victim of love, and lodge thee in the highest stage of Paradise !
How miserable are lovers among the creation, when even their tombs are covered with vile dust !
Were I able [O tomb], I would make of thee a garden, and water it with my streaming tears !

She then again wept violently, and arose, and I arose with her ; and after we had returned to the garden, she said to me, I conjure thee by Allah that thou never forsake me. And I replied, I hear and obey. So I resumed my visits to her as before, and she treated me with kindness and honour, and used to ask me respecting the two phrases which my cousin 'Azizeh had mentioned to my mother, and I repeated them to her. Thus I remained, eating and drinking, and enjoying her conversation, and attiring myself in changes of delicate clothing, until I became stout and fat, and I experienced neither anxiety nor grief nor sorrow, and forgot my cousin.

I continued drowned in these pleasures for a whole year ; and at the commencement of the new year, I entered the bath, and refreshed myself, and put on a handsome suit ; and after I had gone forth from the bath, I drank a cup of wine, and smelt the odours of my clothes, which were richly perfumed with various scents. My heart was unoppressed by calamities or misfortunes ; and when the hour of night-fall came, I desired to repair to the damsel ; but I was intoxicated, and knew not my way ; and, in going to her, intoxication led me aside into a by-street called the street of the Nakib : and as I was proceeding along it, lo, an old woman came, with a lighted candle in one of her hands, and in her other hand a folded letter. I advanced towards her, and she, with weeping eye, said to me, O my son, art thou able to read ? I answered her, Yes, my old aunt. And

she said, Take this letter, and read it to me. And she handed me the letter ; so I took it from her and opened it, and read to her its contents, informing her that it was a letter from the absent, with salutations to the beloved. And when she heard this, she rejoiced at the good news, and ejaculated a prayer for me, saying, May God dispel thine anxiety as thou hast dispelled mine ! She then took the letter, and proceeded a few steps ; but presently she returned to me, and, kissing my hand, said, O my lord, may God (whose name be exalted !) give thee enjoyment of thy youth, and not disgrace thee. I beg that thou wilt walk with me a few paces, to that door ; for I have told them what thou hast read to me of the letter, and they do not believe me : come with me, therefore, two steps, and read to them the letter outside the door, and accept my prayer for thee.—And what, said I, is the history of this letter ? She answered, O my son, this letter hath come from my son, who hath been absent from us for the space of ten years ; for he journeyed with merchandise, and hath remained abroad during that period, and we relinquished all hope of his return, thinking that he was dead : then came to us this letter from him ; and he hath a sister who hath wept for him during his absence night and day ; and I told her that he was in health and prosperity ; but she believed me not, and said to me, Thou must bring me a person to read this letter and to acquaint me with its contents, that my heart may be set at ease and my mind comforted.—Thou knowest, O my son, that the loving is prepossessed with evil anticipations : favour me, therefore, by reading this letter while thou shalt stand outside the curtain, and his sister shall hear it within the door, that the recompense of him who accomplisheth a want for a Muslim, and dispelleth from his mind a trouble, may be thine : for the Apostle of God (may God bless and save him !) hath said, Whoso dispelleth from the mind of a sorrowful person one of the troubles of this world, God will dispel from his mind one of the troubles of the world to come :—and in another tradition, Whoso dispelleth from the mind of his brother one of the troubles of this world, God will dispel from his mind seventy-two of the troubles of the day of resurrection :—and now I have desired thee, do not

disappoint me.—So I replied, I hear and obey: proceed before me.

She therefore walked before me, and I followed her a little way, until she arrived at a great door overlaid with copper; and she stopped at this door, and called out in Persian, and immediately a damsels approached, with light and nimble step. Her trousers were tucked up to her knees, and I beheld a pair of legs that confounded the mind and the eye by their beauty: they were like two columns of alabaster, and ornamented with anklets of gold set with jewels. The skirts of her outer clothes were tucked up under her arms, and her sleeves were turned up from her arms, and I looked at her white wrists, and upon them were two pairs of bracelets: in her ears were two ear-rings of pearls; and upon her neck was a necklace of costly jewels; and on her head, a *kufiyeh*, quite new, adorned with precious gems. She had tucked the skirt of her inner tunic within the band of her trousers, and appeared as though she had been employed in some active work. And when she beheld me, she said, with an eloquent and sweet tongue that I had never heard surpassed in sweetness, O my mother, is this he who hath come to read the letter? She answered, Yes. And the damsels stretched forth her hand to me with the letter. There was, between her and the door, a distance of about half a rod; and I extended my hand to take the letter from her, and put my head and shoulders within the door to draw near to her; but before I knew what she was about to do, the old woman placed her head against my back, and pushed me forward, while my hand was holding the letter, and I looked around, and found myself in the midst of the house; that is, within the vestibule. The old woman entered more quickly than the blinding lightning, and had nothing to do but to shut the door: and when the damsels beheld me within the vestibule, she approached me, and pressed me to her bosom, and, taking me by the hand, unable to extricate myself from her grasp, led me, preceded by the old woman with the lighted candle, until she had passed through seven vestibules; after which she conducted me into a large saloon, with four *liwans*, in which a horseman might play at goff. She then seated me, and said to

me, Open thine eye. And I did so, giddy from the violence that I had experienced, and saw that the whole construction of the saloon was of the most beautiful alabaster, and all its furniture, including the cushions and mattresses, of brocade. In it were also two benches of brass, and a couch of red gold set with pearls and jewels, not suitable to any but a King like thee.

After this, she said to me, O 'Aziz, which of the two states is the more agreeable to thee, life or death? I answered her, Life. And she said, Then if life is more agreeable to thee, marry me.—I dislike, I replied, marrying such a person as thou. She rejoined, If thou marry me, thou wilt be secure from the daughter of the crafty Delileh.—And who, said I, is the daughter of the crafty Delileh? She laughed, and answered, How is it that thou knowest her not, when thou hast now been in her company a year and four months? May Allah (whose name be exalted!) destroy her. Verily there existeth not any one more treacherous than she. How many persons hath she killed before thee, and what deeds hath she done! And how hast thou escaped from her, without her killing or troubling thee, when thou hast been in her company all this time?—When I heard her words, I wondered extremely, and said to her, O my mistress, who acquainted thee with her? She answered, I know her as the age knoweth its calamities; but I desire that thou inform me of all that thou hast experienced from her, that I may know the cause of thy safety from her. So I related to her all that had happened to me with her and with my cousin 'Azizeh; and she exclaimed, Allah have mercy upon her!—and her eyes shed tears, and she struck her hands together, when she heard of the death of my cousin 'Azizeh, and said, May Allah compensate thee abundantly for the loss of her, O 'Aziz; for she hath been the cause of thy safety from the daughter of the crafty Delileh; and had it not been for her, thou hadst perished.⁷⁸ After this, she clapped her hands, and said, O my mother, bring in those who are with thee. And lo, the old woman approached with four lawful witnesses; and she lighted four candles; and when the witnesses entered, they saluted me, and seated themselves; and the damsels covered

herself with an izar, and appointed one of the witnesses to be her deputy in making her contract. So they performed the marriage-contract, and she affirmed of herself that she had received the whole of the dowry, both the portion usually paid in advance and the arrears, and that she was indebted to me in the sum of ten thousand pieces of silver; after which she gave to the witnesses their fees, and they departed.

On the following day, I desired to go out; but she approached me laughing, and said, Dost thou think that going out from the bath is like entering it?* I imagine thou thinkest me to be like the daughter of the crafty Delileh. Beware of entertaining such an idea. Thou art no other than my husband, according to the Kur'an and the Sunneh; and if thou hast been intoxicated, return to thy reason. Verily this house in which thou art is not opened but on one day in every year. Go to the street-door and look. —So I went and looked, and found it closed and nailed, and returned and told her so; and she said to me, O 'Aziz, we have of flour and grain and fruits and pomegranates and sugar and meat and sheep and fowls and other provisions what will suffice us for many years, and from this last night our door will not be opened until after a year, and I know that thou wilt not behold thyself outside this house until after a year hath expired. Upon this I exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God! And she laughed, and I laughed also, and complied with her orders, and remained with her until the twelve months of the year had expired, when I was blest with a son by her. And on the first day of the following year, I heard the opening of the door, and lo, men came in with ka'ks † and flour and sugar; and I desired to go out; but she said to me, Wait until nightfall, and as thou camest in, so go forth. I therefore waited until that hour, and was on the point of going out, in fear and trembling, when she said to me, By Allah, I will not let thee go until I have made thee swear to me that thou wilt return this night before the door is closed. So I promised her to do it; and she made me swear by binding

* Payment is made on leaving the bath.

† Sweet biscuits (or cakes) of flour and butter.

oaths upon the sword and the Kur'an, and by the oath of divorce, that I would return to her.

I then went forth from her, and repaired to the garden. I found it open as usual, and was angry, saying within myself, I have been absent from this place a whole year, and, coming unawares, have found it open as usual. I wonder if the damsel be still there as heretofore, and I must enter and see before I go to my mother.—It was then nightfall, and I entered the garden, and, proceeding to the mak'ad, found the daughter of the crafty Delileh sitting with her head upon her knee and her hand upon her cheek. Her complexion was changed, and her eyes were sunk, and when she beheld me she exclaimed, Praise be to God for thy safety!—and she endeavoured to rise, but fell down through her joy. I was ashamed at seeing her, and hung down my head; but presently I advanced to her and kissed her, and said to her, How didst thou know that I was coming to thee at this time? She answered, I knew it not. By Allah, for a year I have not tasted sleep; but haye sat up every night expecting thee, and in this state have I been from the day when thou wentest forth from me and I gave thee the new suit of clothing and thou promisedst me that thou wouldst return to me. I remained expecting thee, and thou camest not the first night, nor the second, nor the third: so I still waited in expectation of thy coming; for such is the way of the lover: and I would now that thou tell me what hath been the cause of thine absence from me this year.—I therefore told her; and when she knew that I had married, her countenance became pale. I then said to her, I have come to thee this night, but must go before the morning. But she exclaimed, Is it not enough for her to have married thee, and to have employed this stratagem against thee, and imprisoned thee with her a whole year, that she hath made thee swear by the oath of divorce that thou wilt return to her before the morning, and will not allow thee to divert thyself with thy mother nor with me, and cannot endure thy passing one night with either of us? What then must be the state of her from whom thou hast been absent a whole year, though I knew thee before she did! But may Allah have mercy on 'Azizeh; for she

suffered what none other hath suffered, and endured with patience that of which none else hath endured the like, and died through thy oppression. It was she who protected thee from me. I thought that thou wouldest return, and gave thee liberty, though I was able to imprison thee, and to destroy thee.

Having thus said, she wept, and became enraged, and looked at me with the eye of anger; and when I beheld her in this state, the muscles of my side quivered, and I feared her, and became as the bean upon the fire. She then cried out, and suddenly ten female slaves came to me, and threw me upon the floor; and when I fell under their hands, she arose, and, taking a knife, said, I will slaughter thee as goats are slaughtered, and this shall be thy least recompence for that which thou hast done unto thy cousin. When I beheld myself, therefore, beneath her female slaves, and my cheek was soiled with the dust, and I saw the knife in her hand, I looked upon death as inevitable. I implored her mercy; but she only increased in hardness, and ordered the female slaves to bind my hands behind me; and they did so, and, throwing me upon my back, seated themselves upon my body, and held my head. Then two of them arose and took hold of my toes, and two others seated themselves upon my legs; after which, their mistress arose, with two others of them, and she ordered them to beat me; whereupon they beat me until I fainted, and my voice became inaudible; and when I recovered, I said within myself, Verily my being slaughtered were easier to me than this beating! I bethought myself of the words of my cousin, when she said, May God avert from thee her wickedness!—and I cried out and wept until my voice failed. She then sharpened the knife, and said to the female slaves, Uncover his throat. But God inspired me to repeat the two phrases which my cousin had charged me to utter, namely, Fidelity is good, and treachery is base;—and when she heard this, she cried out and said, Allah have mercy upon thee, O ‘Azizeh! Would that thy youth had been spared! Thou hast profited thy cousin during thy life and after thy death!—Then addressing me, she added, By Allah, thou hast saved thy life from me by means of these

two phrases ; but I must cause thee to bear a mark of my resentment.—So saying, she inflicted upon me a cruel wound, and I fainted ; but when I recovered, the blood had stopped, and she gave me to drink a cup of wine, and spurned me with her foot.

I rose ; but was unable at first to walk : presently, however, I proceeded by little and little until I arrived at the door of my wife's house. I found it open, and threw myself within it, in a state of distraction ; and my wife came and took me up and conveyed me to the saloon, where I fell into a deep sleep ; but when I awoke, I found myself laid at the gate of the garden.

In anguish I rose, and went to my home, and, entering the house, found my mother weeping for me, and exclaiming, Would that I knew, O my son, in what land thou art ! So I approached her, and threw myself upon her, and when she beheld me, she saw that I was unwell. Yellowness and blackness were mingled upon my face ; and I remembered my cousin, and the kindness she had shewn me, and was convinced that she loved me. I wept for her, and my mother also wept, and then said to me, O my son, thy father is dead. And upon this, my rage increased, and I wept until I became insensible ; and when I recovered, I looked towards the place where my cousin was accustomed to sit, and wept again till I fainted from the violence of my lamentation. I ceased not to weep and wail until midnight, when my mother said to me, Thy father hath been dead ten days. But I replied, I think of no one but my cousin ; for I deserve what hath happened to me, because I neglected her when she loved me. She asked me, therefore, And what hath happened to thee ? So I related to her that which had befallen me ; to which she replied, Praise be to God that this happened to thee and that she did not slaughter thee ! She then applied remedies to my wound until I recovered, and regained my usual strength ; and she said to me, O my son, I will now produce to thee the deposit with which thy cousin intrusted me ; for it is thine, and she made me swear that I would not produce it to thee until I saw that thou rememberedst her and mournedst for her, and that thine affections for another were severed ; and now I hope

that I find in thee these dispositions. She therefore arose, and, opening a chest, took forth from it this piece of linen containing the design of the gazelles, which I had originally given to her; and when I took it, I found written upon it some verses complaining of her unrequited love for me, and there fell from it a paper containing some words of consolation and counsel.

As soon as I had read and understood this paper, I wept again, and my mother did the same, and I continued looking at it and weeping until the approach of night; and in this state I remained for the space of a year; after which, some merchants of my city, the same whom I am accompanying in this caravan, prepared for a journey; and my mother suggested to me that I should fit myself out and go with them, saying to me, Perhaps the journey will dispel this sorrow which thou sufferest, and thou wilt be absent a year, or two years, or three, until the caravan returneth, and thy heart may become dilated. Thus she continued to persuade me, so that I prepared some merchandise, and journeyed with them; but my tears have not dried up during my travels; for at every station where we halt I spread this piece of linen before me, and look at this design, and think of my cousin, and weep for her as thou seest, since she loved me excessively, and died through my unkindness; I doing nothing but evil to her, while she did nothing to me but what was good. When the merchants return from their journey, I shall return with them, and the period of my absence will be a complete year; but I still suffer increasing sorrow; and my sorrow hath been only augmented in consequence of my passing by the Islands of Camphor and the Castle of Crystal.

These Islands are seven in number, and the sovereign of them is a King named Shah-Zeman. He hath a daughter named Dunya; and it was told me that it was she who worked the designs of the gazelles, and that this design which is in my possession was one of her work; and when I knew this, I became excessively desirous of seeing her: so, when the caravan entered her country, I went forth and wandered about the gardens, which contained a profusion of trees. The superintendent of the gardens was a sheykh

advanced in age; and I said to him, O sheykh, to whom doth this garden belong? He answered, To the King's daughter, the lady Dunya, and we are beneath her palace; and if thou desire to amuse thyself, open the private door and take a view of the garden and smell the odours of the flowers. So I said to him, Have the kindness to allow me to sit in this garden until she passeth by, that I may enjoy a glance at her. The sheykh replied, There will be no harm in thy doing so. When he said this, therefore, I gave him some money, saying to him, Buy for us something to eat. And he rejoiced at receiving the money, and, opening the door, conducted me within; and we proceeded until we came to a pleasant spot, where he brought me some delicate fruits, and said to me, Sit here while I go and return to thee. And he left me and departed, and, after he had been absent a while, returned bringing a roasted lamb; and we ate until we were satisfied, my heart longing to behold the lady, and while we were sitting, lo, the door opened; whereupon he said to me, Rise, and conceal thyself. So I rose, and hid myself; and a black eunuch put forth his head from the door, and said, O sheykh, is any one with thee? He answered, No.—Then close the door, said the eunuch. The sheykh, therefore, closed the door of the garden; and lo, the lady Dunya came forth. When I beheld her, I thought that the moon had descended upon the earth; my mind was confounded, and I desired her as the thirsty longeth for water; and after a while, she closed the door and departed. I then went forth from the garden, and repaired to my lodging, knowing that I could not obtain access to her; and when my companions prepared for departure, I also prepared myself, and travelled with them towards thy city; and on our arrival here, we met with thee.—This is my story, and this is what hath happened unto me; and peace be on thee.—

When Taj-el-Muluk heard this story, his heart became troubled with love for the lady Dunya. He then mounted his horse, and, taking with him 'Aziz, returned to his father's city, where he assigned to him a house, and furnished it

with everything that he required ; after which he left him, and repaired to his palace. His tears ran down upon his cheeks (for hearing affecteth as sight and union), and in this state he remained until his father came in to him, and, finding that his colour was changed, knew that he was oppressed by anxiety and grief : so he said to him, O my son, acquaint me with thy case, and tell me what hath happened to thee to change thy colour. He therefore related to him all that he had heard of the story of Dunya, and how he had fallen in love with her from hearsay, without having seen her ; whereupon his father said to him, O my son, her father is a King, and his country is distant from us : abandon, therefore, this idea, and enter the palace of thy mother ; for in it are five hundred female slaves like so many moons, and whoever of them pleaseth thee do thou take her ; or, if none of them please thee, we will demand in marriage for thee one of the daughters of the Kings, more beautiful than the lady Dunya. But he replied, O my father, I desire not any but her : it was she who worked the design of the gazelles that I saw, and I must have her, or I will flee into the deserts, and kill myself on her account.

So his father said, Have patience with me, O my son, that I may send to her father and demand her of him in marriage, and accomplish for thee thy wish, like as I did for myself in the case of thy mother ; and if he consent not, I will convulse his kingdom around him, and send against him an army of which the rear shall be with me when the van is with him. He then called for the young man 'Aziz, and said to him, O my son, knowest thou the way ? He answered, Yes.—Then I desire of thee, said the King, that thou journey with my Wezir. And 'Aziz replied, I hear and obey, O King of the age. The King, therefore, summoned his Wezir, and said to him, Manage for me the affair of my son according to thy knowledge, and repair to the Islands of Camphor, and demand in marriage the daughter of their King. He replied, I hear and obey. And Taj-el-Muluk returned to his apartments, and his malady and impatience increased : he fell down in a swoon, and recovered not until the morning ; and when the morning arrived, his father came to him, and saw his complexion more changed,

and his sallowness increased ; and he exhorted him to patience, and promised him the accomplishment of his union.

The King then equipped 'Aziz, with his Wezir, and supplied them with the presents ; and they journeyed days and nights until they beheld the Islands of Camphor, when they halted on the bank of a river, and the Wezir sent forward a messenger from his party to the King, to acquaint him with their approach ; and half a day after the departure of the messenger, suddenly they saw that the chamberlains of the King, and his emirs, had advanced to meet them from the distance of a league ; and they met them, and attended them until they went in with them to the King. They placed before the King the presents, and remained in his palace four days ; and on the fifth day the Wezir arose and went in to the King, and, standing before him, delivered to him his message, and acquainted him with the cause of his coming ; but the King was perplexed how to answer, for his daughter liked not marriage ; and he hung down his head for a while towards the floor ; and after this he raised it, and, looking towards one of the eunuchs, said to him, Go to thy mistress Dunya, and acquaint her with what thou hast heard, and with the purpose of the visit of this Wezir. So the eunuch went, and, after a short absence, returned to the King, and said to him, O King of the age, when I went in to the lady Dunya, and acquainted her with what I had heard, she was violently enraged, and rose against me with a stick, and would have broken my head ; wherefore I fled from her ; and she said to me, If my father force me to marry, him whom I marry I will kill. Her father, therefore, said to the Wezir and 'Aziz, Salute ye the King, and inform him of this, and that my daughter liketh not marriage. Accordingly the Wezir returned with his attendants unsuccessful, and they continued their journey until they went in unto the King, and acquainted him with what had happened ; and upon this he ordered the chiefs to call together the troops that they might march to war ; but the Wezir said to him, Do not this ; for the King is not in fault : the refusal is on the part of his daughter, who, when she knew of this proposal, sent to say, If my father force

me to marry, I will kill him whom I marry, and kill myself after him.

And when the King heard the words of the Wezir, he feared for his son Taj-el-Muluk, and said, If I make war upon her father, and obtain possession of his daughter, she will kill herself. He then acquainted his son Taj-el-Muluk with the truth of the case; and when the prince heard it, he said to his father, O my father, I cannot exist without her: I will therefore go to her, and seek means of obtaining an interview with her, though I die in the attempt: and I will do nothing but this. His father said, How wilt thou go to her? He answered, I will go in the disguise of a merchant.—Then if it must be so, rejoined the King, take with thee the Wezir and 'Aziz. He then took forth for him some money from his treasuries, and prepared for him merchandise at the price of a hundred thousand pieces of gold, and they both agreed as to this course; and when night came, Taj-el-Muluk and 'Aziz went to the abode of the latter, and there passed that night. But the heart of Taj-el-Muluk was captivated, and neither eating nor rest pleased him: reflections overwhelmed him, and he was drowned in them; and, longing for his beloved, he poured forth his tears, and wept violently; and 'Aziz wept with him, reflecting upon his cousin; and they both continued thus until the morning, when Taj-el-Muluk arose and went in to his mother. He was equipped for the journey; and she asked him respecting his state: so he acquainted her with the whole truth; and she gave him fifty thousand pieces of gold, and bade him farewell, and he went forth from her, while she offered up prayers for his safety, and for his union with the object of his love. He then went in to his father, and asked his permission to depart; and the King granted him permission, and gave him fifty thousand pieces of gold, and ordered that a tent should be pitched for him outside the city.

A large tent was therefore pitched for him; and after they had remained in it two days, they commenced their journey; and Taj-el-Muluk treated 'Aziz with familiar kindness, and said to him, O my brother, I cannot henceforth part with thee.—And I, replied 'Aziz, am of the like mind,

and desire to die at thy feet ; but, O my brother, my heart is troubled with thoughts of my mother. So Taj-el-Muluk said, When we shall have attained our wish, all will be well. Now the Wezir had charged Taj-el-Muluk to display an air of patience, and 'Aziz occupied himself with reciting to him verses, and narrating to him histories and tales ; and they continued on their way by night and day for the space of two months. The length of the journey became wearisome to Taj-el-Muluk ; and the violence of his desire, and his passion and distraction, increased : so when they drew near to the city, he rejoiced excessively, and his anxiety and grief ceased.

They entered it in the garb of merchants, the King's son being also clad in the same manner, and, coming to a place known as the abode of merchants, which was a large Khan, Taj-el-Muluk said to 'Aziz, Is this the abode of the merchants ? 'Aziz answered, Yes : it is not, however, the Khan in which I lodged with the caravan that I accompanied ; but it is better than that. So they made their camels lie down, and unloaded, and, having deposited their goods in the magazines, remained there to take rest four days. The Wezir then suggested to them that they should hire for themselves a large house ; to which they assented ; and they hired a spacious house, fitted for festivities. There they took up their abode ; and the Wezir and 'Aziz studied to devise some stratagem for the sake of Taj-el-Muluk, who was perplexed, not knowing what to do. The Wezir could contrive no other plan than that of his opening for himself a shop to carry on the trade of a merchant in the market of fine stuffs : he therefore addressed Taj-el-Muluk and 'Aziz, and said to them, Know that if we remain in this state we shall not attain our wish ; and a thing hath occurred to my mind which probably may be advisable, if it be the will of God. So they replied, Do what seemeth fit to thee ; for a blessing attendeth the aged, and especially in thy case, since thou hast devoted thyself to the management of affairs : therefore give us the advice which hath suggested itself to thy mind. And he said to Taj-el-Muluk, It is my opinion that we should hire for thee a shop in the market of fine stuffs, and that thou shouldst sit in it to sell and buy ; for

every person of the higher ranks and of the people in general standeth in need of such stuffs, and if thou sit in that shop thy affair will be arranged, if it be the will of God (whose name be exalted !), especially because of thy comely person ; but make 'Aziz thy trusty attendant, and seat him in the shop to hand to thee the stuffs. And when Taj-el-Muluk heard these words, he said, This is a judicious opinion :—and immediately he took forth a suit of merchant's attire, and clad himself in it, and arose and went forth, followed by his young men, and gave to one of them a thousand pieces of gold to fit up the shop.

They proceeded until they arrived at the market of fine stuffs, and when the merchants saw Taj-el-Muluk, and observed his handsome and comely person, they were confounded, and began to say, Hath Ridwan* opened the gates of Paradise and neglected them, so that this youth of surprising beauty hath come forth ?—and one said, This is probably one of the angels. And when they went in among the merchants, they inquired for the shop of the Sheykh of the market. The merchants, therefore, guided them thither, and they went to him ; and as they approached him, he and the merchants who were with him rose to them, and received them with honour, especially the excellent Wezir ; for they saw him to be an aged and venerable man ; and observing that he was accompanied by Taj-el-Muluk and 'Aziz, they said, No doubt this sheykh is the father of these two young men. The Wezir then said to them, Who among you is the Sheykh of the market ? They answered, This is he. And the Wezir, looking at him and observing him, saw that he was an old man of grave and respectable aspect, and possessing servants and young men. The Sheykh of the market greeted them with friendly compliments, and treated them with great honour, and, having seated them by his side, said to them, Have ye any business which we may have the happiness of transacting ? The Wezir answered, Yes : I am an old man, advanced in age, and I have these two young men : I have travelled with them through all regions and countries, and have not entered a town without remaining in it a whole year, that they might amuse themselves

* The guardian of Paradise.

with the sight of it and become acquainted with its inhabitants ; and now I have come to this your town, and have chosen to make a stay in it : I therefore desire of thee one of the best shops, that I may seat them in it to traffic, and that they may amuse themselves with the sight of this city, and acquire the manners of its people, and obtain an experience in buying and selling and other commercial transactions.

So the Sheykh of the market replied, There will be no harm in doing so :—and, looking at the two young men, he was delighted with them, and he arose and stood like a servant before them to wait upon them. And afterwards he went and prepared for them the shop : it was in the midst of the market, and there was none larger than it, nor any more handsome there ; for it was spacious and decorated, and contained shelves of ivory and ebony. He then delivered the keys to the Wezir (who was also in the garb of a merchant), and said, God grant that it may be attended with blessings to thy two sons ! And when the Wezir had taken the keys of the shop, he went to it, together with the servants, who deposited in it their goods ; and they ordered the servants to remove thither all the merchandise and stuffs and rarities that they had. These things were worth treasures of wealth ; and they transported the whole of them to the shop. They then passed the night, and in the morning the Wezir conducted the two young men to the bath, where they washed and enjoyed themselves to the utmost, after which they returned to their abode to rest from the fatigue of bathing, and ate and drank ; and they passed the next night in their abode in the most perfect joy and happiness. And on the following morning they rose from their sleep, and, having performed the ablution, recited the divinely-ordained prayers, and drank their morning-beverage ; and when daylight came, and the shops and markets were opened, they went forth from their abode, and repaired to the market, and opened the shop. The servants had prepared it for them in the handsomest manner, and spread it with carpets of silk, and placed in it two mattresses, each of which was worth a hundred pieces of gold ; and upon each mattress they spread a skin such as Kings sit upon,

surrounded with an edge of gold: so Taj-el-Muluk seated himself upon one mattress, and 'Aziz upon the other, and the Wezir sat in the midst of the shop, while the servants stood before them. The people heard of them, and crowded about them, and they sold of their merchandise; and the fame of Taj-el-Muluk was spread through the city, and the report of his handsomeness and comeliness was blazed throughout it. They continued this life for several days, the people pressing to them; after which the Wezir addressed Taj-el-Muluk, and enjoined him to conceal his case, and, having charged 'Aziz to keep watch over him, repaired to the house to plan some mode of proceeding that might be of advantage to them. Meanwhile, Taj-el-Muluk and 'Aziz sat conversing together; and the former said, Perhaps some one may come from the lady Dunya.

Thus Taj-el-Muluk passed his time days and nights, and slept not; desire overpowered him, and he became more and more emaciated and infirm, renouncing the delight of sleep, and abstaining from drink and food; but still he was like the full moon: and as he was sitting one day, lo, an old woman approached and advanced towards him, followed by two female slaves, and she continued to draw near until she stopped at his shop. Beholding his graceful person, and his handsome and lovely aspect, she wondered at his beauty, and said, Extolled be the perfection of Him who created thee! Extolled be the perfection of Him who hath made thee a temptation to all creatures!—She ceased not to gaze at him, and said, This is not a mortal: this is no other than a noble angel! Then drawing close to him, she saluted him, and he returned her salutation, and rose to her, standing upon his feet, and smiled in her face. All this he did at the hinting of 'Aziz; after which he seated her by his side, and occupied himself with fanning her until she had rested herself; when she said to him, O my son! O thou of perfect qualities and graces! art thou of this country?—Taj-el-Muluk answered her, with an eloquent and sweet and charming voice, By Allah, O my mistress, in my life I never entered this country until now; and I have not taken up my abode in it but for the sake of amusement. And she wished him honour, and welcomed him, and said, What stuffs hast thou brought with

thee? Show me something beautiful; for the beautiful bringeth not anything but what is beautiful.—And when Taj-el-Muluk heard her words his heart palpitated; but he understood not their meaning: so 'Aziz made a sign to him; and Taj-el-Muluk said to her, I have everything that thou desirest of stuffs suitable only to Kings and the daughters of Kings. For whom, then, wouldest thou purchase, that I may display to thee what will be appropriate?—He desired by this question to learn the meaning of her words; and she answered, I want some stuff suitable to the lady Dunya, the daughter of King Shah-Zeman. On hearing the mention of his beloved, Taj-el-Muluk rejoiced exceedingly, and said to 'Aziz, Bring me the most magnificent of the goods that are by thee. And 'Aziz gave him a wrapper, and untied it before her, and Taj-el-Muluk said to her, Choose what will suit her; for this is such as is not found with any but me. So the old woman chose some stuff that was worth a thousand pieces of gold; and said, What is the price of this?—What! said he, shall I bargain with a person like thee respecting this contemptible thing? Praise be to God who hath made me acquainted with thee.—And the old woman exclaimed, I invoke, for thy comely face, the protection of the Lord of the Daybreak! for verily thy face is comely, and so are thine actions. Joy be to her who possesseth thee, and especially if she be endowed with beauty like thee!—Upon this, Taj-el-Muluk laughed until he fell backwards, and said [within himself], O Accomplisher of desires by the means of wicked old women! And she said to him, O my son, what is thy name? He answered, My name is Taj-el-Muluk.—This, she replied, is one of the names of Kings; but thou art in the garb of the merchants. So 'Aziz said, From the affection of his family for him, and the high estimation in which they held him, they gave him this name. And the old woman replied, Thou hast spoken truth. May God avert from you the evil of the envious, though hearts be broken by your charms!

She then took the stuff, and departed, confounded by his handsomeness and loveliness and elegant form; and she proceeded until she went in to the lady Dunya, when she said to her, O my mistress, I have brought thee some beautiful stuff.—Shew it me, said the lady. And she replied, O

my mistress, here it is : turn it over, and behold it. And when the lady Dunya saw it, she said to her, O my nurse, verily this is beautiful stuff : I have not seen such in our city ! —O my mistress, replied the old woman, the seller of it surpasseth it in beauty. It seemeth as though Ridwan had opened the gates of Paradise and neglected them, and so the merchant who selleth this stuff had come forth from it. I wish he were with thee ; for he is a temptation to every one who beholdeth him. He hath come to our city with these stuffs for the sake of amusement.—At these words of the old woman, the lady Dunya laughed, and said, Allah afflict thee, thou ill-omened old woman ! Thou hast spoken nonsense, and art become insane.—She then added, Give me the stuff that I may examine it closely. So the old woman handed it to her, and she looked at it again, and saw that it was but little, and that its price was great ; and she wondered at its beauty ; for she had never in her life seen anything like it. The old woman then said to her, O my mistress, if thou didst behold its owner, thou wouldest know that he is the handsomest person on the face of the earth. And the lady Dunya said to her, Didst thou ask him if he had any want to be performed, that he might acquaint us with it, and thou mightest accomplish it for him ? The old woman, shaking her head, replied, Allah preserve thy sagacity ! By Allah, he hath a want. And is any person without one ?—Go to him, then, said the lady Dunya, and salute him, and say to him, I have been honoured by thine arrival in our city, and whatever want thou hast, we will perform it for thee on the head and the eye.

The old woman, therefore, returned immediately to Taj-el-Muluk, and when he saw her, his heart leaped with joy, and he rose to her, standing upon his feet, and, taking her hand, seated her by his side. So when she had sat and rested herself, she informed him of that which the lady Dunya had said. On hearing this, he was filled with the utmost joy ; his bosom expanded, and he said within himself, I have accomplished my wish ! He then said to the old woman, Perhaps thou wilt convey to her a letter from me, and bring me back the answer. She replied, I hear and obey. And when he heard her reply, he said to 'Aziz, Give

me an inkhorn and paper, and a pen of brass. And 'Aziz having given him these things, he wrote the following verses :—

I write to thee a letter, O object of my petition, expressive of the torment that I suffer from separation ;
 And first, I make known to thee the ardour of my heart ; and secondly, my desire and eager longing ;
 And thirdly, the expiring of my life and patience ; and fourthly, that all the violence of my love remaineth ;
 And fifthly, I ask, When shall I behold thee ? and sixthly, When shall be the day of our union ?

He then added beneath, This letter is from the captive of desire, incarcerated in the prison of longing expectation, to whom there can be no liberation but by enjoying an interview, even were it with the phantom of the object of his hope ; for he is enduring a painful torment from the separation of his beloved.—Then his tears flowed, and he wrote these two verses :—

I write unto thee with my tears flowing, and the drops from my eyes descending incessantly ;
 But I am not despairing of the favour of my Lord : perhaps some day our union may take place.

He then folded the letter, and sealed it, and gave it to the old woman, saying, Convey it to the lady Dunya. She replied, I hear and obey. And he gave her a thousand pieces of gold, and said, Receive this as a present from me. So the old woman took it and departed, praying for him.

She stopped not until she went in to the lady Dunya, who, when she beheld her, said to her, O my nurse, what hath he demanded that we should do for him ?—O my mistress, she answered, he hath sent with me a letter, and I know not its contents. And she handed the letter to her. So the lady Dunya took it and read it, and understood its meaning, and exclaimed, Whence is he, and to what doth he aspire, that this merchant openeth a correspondence with me ? Then slapping her face, she said, Were it not for my fear of God (whose name be exalted !) I would crucify him upon his shop. So the old woman said to her, What is in this letter, that it hath disturbed thy heart ? Doth it contain a complaint of oppression, or a demand for the price of the

stuff?—Wo to thee! she answered: it containeth not that, nor anything but love and affection; and all this is through thee. Or, if not, how should this devil presume to employ these words?—O my mistress, replied the old woman, thou art residing in thy lofty palace, and no one can obtain access to thee; not even the flying bird. Allah preserve thee from blame and censure! Thou hast nothing to fear from the barking of dogs. Be not angry with me for my bringing thee this letter when I knew not its contents: but it is my opinion that thou shouldst return him an answer, and threaten him in it with slaughter, and forbid him from employing these vain words; for he will abstain, and not do so again.—The lady Dunya said, I fear to write to him, lest he covet me more. But the old woman replied, When he heareth the threatening, and promise of punishment, he will desist from his present conduct. So she said, Bring me an inkhorn and paper, and a pen of brass. And when they had brought them to her, she wrote these verses:—

O pretender to love and affliction and sleeplessness, and feelings of rapturous passion, and anxiety!
 Dost thou seek for a meeting, O deceived, from a moon? Doth any attain from a moon his wish?
 I advise thine abstaining from thy desire: forbear then; for thou art exposed to peril.
 If thou again make use of these words, I will visit thee with a punishment of the utmost severity.
 By Him who created mankind of clotted blood, and who gave light to the sun and the moon!
 If thou repeat the proposal thou hast made, I will assuredly crucify thee on the trunk of a tree.

She then folded up the letter, and gave it to the old woman, saying to her, Deliver it to him, and say to him, Abstain from these words. And she replied, I hear and obey.

She took the letter, full of joy, and went with it to her house, where she passed the night; and in the morning she repaired to the shop of Taj-el-Muluk, whom she found expecting her. As soon as he beheld her, he almost flew with joy, and when she drew near to him he rose to her, standing upon his feet, and seated her by his side; and she took forth the letter, and handed it to him, saying, Read its contents. She then said to him, The lady Dunya, when she

read thy letter, was enraged; but I coaxed her and jested with her until I made her laugh, and she was moved with pity for thee, and returned thee an answer. So Taj-el-Muluk thanked her for this, and, having ordered 'Aziz to give her a thousand pieces of gold, read the letter, and understood it; and he wept violently, so that the heart of the old woman was moved with compassion for him, and his weeping and complaining grieved her. She said to him, O my son, and what is in this paper, that it hath made thee weep? He answered, She threateneth me with slaughter and crucifixion, and forbiddeth my writing to her; but if I write not to her, my death will be preferable to my life; therefore take a reply to her letter, and let her do what she will.—By thy youth, replied the old woman, I must risk my life for thee, and enable thee to attain thy desire, and accomplish for thee that which is in thy heart. And Taj-el-Muluk said, Whatsoever thou dost I will requite thee for it; and it shall be determined by thee; for thou art experienced in the management of affairs, and skilled in the modes of intrigue, and everything that is difficult becometh easy to thee; and God is able to accomplish all things. So he took a paper, and wrote in it these verses:—

She threatened me with slaughter. O my bereavement! Slaughter would be ease to me, and death is decreed.

Death is better than life prolonged to the love-smitten who is debarred from enjoyment and treated with oppression.

By Allah, visit a helpless lover; for I am your slave, and the slave is in captivity.

O my mistress, have mercy on me for my passion; for every one who loveth the virtuous is excusable.

Having done this, he sighed heavily, and wept until the old woman wept with him; after which she took the letter from him, and said to him, Be happy and cheerful; for I must accomplish for thee thy wish.

She then arose, and left him as though he were upon the fire, and repaired to the lady Dunya, whom she found with a countenance changed by her anger in consequence of the former epistle of Taj-el-Muluk; and she handed her the second letter; whereupon her rage increased, and she said to the old woman, Did I not tell thee that he would

covet us more?—And what is this dog, said the old woman, that he should aspire to thee? The lady Dunya replied, Go to him, and say to him, If thou write to her again she will strike off thy head. But the old woman said, Do thou write this to him in a letter, and I will take it with me, that his fear may be the greater. So she took a paper, and wrote in it the following verses:—

O thou who art heedless of the course of misfortunes, and who
canst not accomplish thy desired union!

Dost thou think, O deceived, to attain to Es-Suha,* when thou
canst not reach to the shining moon?

How then dost thou venture to hope for our union, and to hold
in thine embrace my javelin-like form?

Quit, therefore, this project, in fear of my assault on a day of
adversity when hair shall become gray.

Having folded this letter, she handed it to the old woman, who took it and repaired with it to Taj-el-Muluk. At the sight of her he rose, and said, May God never deprive me of the blessing of thy coming! And the old woman replied, Receive the answer to thy letter. So he took the paper and read it, and wept violently, and said, I desire now some one to kill me; for slaughter would be easier to me than this my present state of suffering. He then took an inkhorn and a pen and paper, and wrote a letter expressed in these two verses:—

O my hope, persist not in abandonment and cruelty; but visit a
lover drowned in desire.

Think not that I can survive this oppression; for my soul departeth
at the loss of my beloved.

And he folded the letter, and gave it to the old woman, saying to her, I have wearied thee to no purpose. And again he ordered 'Aziz to give her a thousand pieces of gold, and said to her, O my mother, this paper must be followed by complete union or complete separation.—O my son, she replied, by Allah, I desire for thee nothing but good fortune: and I wish she may be with thee; for thou art the shining moon, and she is the rising sun; and if I do not bring you together, no profit will remain to me in my life. I have passed my life in the practice of artifice and deceit,

* An obscure star (80 by 6) in the Great Bear, at which people look to test their powers of sight.

until I have attained the age of ninety years ; and how then should I fail of uniting two persons in opposition to all law ?

Then, having bidden him farewell, and soothed his mind, she departed, and proceeded without stopping to the lady Dunya ; but she had hidden the paper in her hair ; and when she sat down with her mistress, she scratched her head, and said, O my mistress, perhaps thou wilt untwist my hair ; for it is a long time since I have entered the bath. So the lady Dunya made bare her arms to the elbows, and untwisted the old woman's hair ; whereupon the paper fell from her head ; and the lady Dunya, seeing it, said, What is this paper ? The old woman answered, It seemeth that, when I was sitting at the shop of the merchant, this paper caught to me : give it me, therefore, that I may return it to him. But the lady Dunya opened it and read it, and understood its contents, and exclaimed, This is a trick of thine, and were it not for the fact of thy having reared me, I would lay violent hands upon thee this moment. God hath afflicted me by this merchant, and all that I have experienced from him hath been through thy means. I know not from what country this man hath come. No one but he could ever use such boldness towards me. I fear that this affair which hath happened to me may be discovered, and especially since it relateth to a man who is neither of my family nor of my equals.—The old woman then addressed her, and said, No one can utter a word on this subject, through fear of thy power, and of the dignity of thy father : and there will be no harm in thy returning him an answer.—O my nurse, replied the lady Dunya, this is a devil. How hath he dared to use these words, and feared not the power of the Sultan ? I am perplexed respecting his case ; for if I give orders to kill him, it will not be right : and if I leave him, he will increase in his boldness.—Write to him a letter, rejoined the old woman ; and perhaps he will be restrained. She therefore demanded a paper and an inkhorn and a pen, and wrote to him the following verses :—

Though repeatedly rebuked, still gross ignorance inciteth thee.

How oft shall my hand write verses to forbid thee ?

Thou increasest in eagerness after each prohibition ; but I will only permit thee to conceal thy secret.

Conceal then thy love, and never more utter it ; for if thou utter it, I will not regard thee.

If thou repeat what thou hast said, the raven of separation will announce thy fate :

In a little time will death overtake thee, and thy resting-place be beneath the earth :

Thou shalt leave thy family, O deceived, in sorrow, when the swords of love have prevented thine escape.

Having then folded the paper, she gave it to the old woman, who took it, and went with it to Taj-el-Muluk, and gave it to him ; and when he had read it, and was convinced that she was hard-hearted, and that he could not obtain access to her, he complained of his case to the Wezir, and desired his prudent counsel. The Wezir replied, Know that there remaineth for thee nothing that can be of avail, except thy writing to her another letter, and invoking retribution upon her. So he said, O my brother, O 'Aziz, write in my stead, according to thy knowledge. And 'Aziz took the paper, and wrote these verses :—

O my Lord, by the Five Elders, deliver me ; and to her who hath afflicted me transfer my anguish !

For Thou knowest that I am suffering a tormenting flame, and my beloved hath oppressed me, and will not pity me.

How long shall I feel tenderly to her in my affliction ! And how long shall she tyrannize over my weakness !

I wander in agonies never ending, and find not a person, O my Lord, to assist me.

'Aziz then folded the letter, and handed it to Taj-el-Muluk ; and when he had read it, it pleased him, and he gave it to the old woman.

So she took it, and repaired with it to the lady Dunya, who, as soon as she had read it, and understood its contents, fell into a violent rage, and exclaimed, All that hath befallen me hath been through the means of this ill-omened old woman ! And she called out to the female slaves and eunuchs, and said, Seize this artful old woman, and beat her with your slippers.—So they fell to beating her with their slippers until she fainted ; and when she recovered, the lady Dunya said to her, O wicked old woman, were it not for my fear of God (whose name be exalted !) I had killed thee. She then said to her attendants, Beat her

again. And they beat her again until she fainted ; after which she ordered them to throw her outside the door ; and they dragged her along upon her face and threw her down before the door.

When she recovered, therefore, she rose, and, walking and resting now and then, arrived at her abode. She waited until the morning, and then rose and proceeded to Taj-el-Muluk, whom she acquainted with all that had befallen her ; and it vexed him, and he said to her, We are grieved, O my mother, for that which hath happened to thee : but everything is in accordance with fate and destiny. She replied, Be happy and cheerful ; for I will not cease my endeavours until I procure thee an interview with her, and obtain for thee access to this vile woman who hath tortured me with beating. Taj-el-Muluk then said to her, Acquaint me with the cause of her hatred of men. She replied, It is in consequence of her having had a dream.—And what was that dream ? he asked. She answered, She was sleeping one night, and saw a fowler who set his snare upon the ground, and sprinkled around it some wheat, and then seated himself near it ; and there was not a single bird near but it came to that snare. And she saw, among the birds, two pigeons, a male and a female ; and while she was looking at the snare, the foot of the male bird became entangled in it, and he began to struggle ; whereupon all the other birds flew away from him in alarm ; but his mate returned to him, and flew around over him, and then, alighting upon the snare, while the fowler was inadvertent, began to peck at the mesh in which was the foot of the male, and pulled it with her beak, until she liberated his foot ; and she flew away with him. Then, after this, the fowler came and readjusted the snare, and seated himself at a distance from it ; and but a little while had elapsed when the birds descended, and the snare caught the female pigeon ; upon which all the other birds flew away in alarm, and among them the male pigeon, who returned not to his mate : so the fowler came and took the female bird, and killed her. And the lady Dunya awoke terrified by her dream, and said, Every male is like this, destitute of good ; and men universally are devoid of goodness to women.—And when

the old woman had finished her story to Taj-el-Muluk, he said to her, O my mother, I wish to obtain one glance at her, though my death be the consequence: contrive, therefore, some stratagem for me, that I may see her.—Know, then, said she, that she hath a garden adjacent to her palace, for her diversion, and she goeth out into it once in every month, from the private door, and remaineth in it ten days. The time of her thus going forth to divert herself hath now arrived, and when she is about to do so I will come to thee and inform thee, that thou mayest go thither and meet her; and do thou take care not to quit the garden: for probably, if she behold thy handsome and comely aspect, her heart will be captivated by love of thee; since love is the most powerful means of effecting union.

He replied, I hear and obey:—and he arose, and quitted the shop with 'Aziz, and they both, taking with them the old woman, repaired to their abode, and acquainted her with it; after which, Taj-el-Muluk said to 'Aziz, O my brother, I have no further want of the shop; for I have accomplished the purpose for which I took it; and I give it to thee, with all that it containeth, because thou hast come abroad with me, and absented thyself from thy country. And 'Aziz accepted his present, and they sat conversing together; Taj-el-Muluk asking him respecting his strange adventures, and 'Aziz relating what had happened to him. Then, addressing the Wezir, they acquainted him with the purpose of Taj-el-Muluk, and asked him, What is to be done? He answered, Let us go to the garden. So each of them clad himself in the richest of his apparel, and they went forth, followed by three memluks, and repaired to the garden. They beheld it abounding with trees, and with many rivulets, and saw the superintendent sitting at the gate. They saluted him, therefore, and he returned their salutation, and the Wezir handed to him a hundred pieces of gold, saying to him, I beg thee to receive this money, and to buy for us something to eat; for we are strangers, and I have with me these children whom I wish to divert. So the gardener took the pieces of gold, and replied, Enter, and divert yourselves; for the whole of it is your property; and sit down until I return to you with

something for you to eat. He then went to the market, and the Wezir and Taj-el-Muluk and 'Aziz entered the garden after the gardener had departed to the market; and soon the latter returned, bringing a roasted lamb, which he placed before them. And they ate, and washed their hands, and sat conversing together; and the Wezir said, Inform me respecting this garden: doth it belong to thee, or dost thou rent it? The sheykh replied, It is not mine, but belongeth to the King's daughter, the lady Dunya.—And what, said the Wezir, is thy monthly salary? He answered, One piece of gold, and no more. And the Wezir, taking a view of the garden, beheld there a lofty but old pavilion; and he said, O sheykh, I desire to perform here a good work by which thou wilt be reminded of me.—And what good thing dost thou desire to do? asked the sheykh. The Wezir said, Take these three hundred pieces of gold. And when the superintendent heard the mention of the gold, he replied, O my master, do whatsoever thou wilt. So he took the pieces of gold; and the Wezir said to him, If it be the will of God (whose name be exalted!), we will execute in this place a good work.

They then went forth from him, and returned to their abode, and passed the next night; and on the morrow, the Wezir caused a whitewasher to be brought, and a painter, and an excellent goldsmith; and, having provided them with all the implements that they required, introduced them into the garden, and ordered them to whitewash that pavilion and to decorate it with various kinds of paintings. After which he gave orders to bring the gold, and the ultramarine pigment, and said to the painter, Delineate, at the upper end of this saloon, the figure of a fowler, as though he had set his snare, and a female pigeon had fallen into it, and had become entangled in it by her bill. And when the painter had finished his picture on one portion, the Wezir said to him, Now paint, on this other portion, as before, and represent the female pigeon in the snare, and shew that the fowler hath taken her, and put the knife to her neck; and on the other side paint the figure of a great bird of prey, that hath captured the male pigeon, and fixed his talons into him. So he did this; and when he had finished

these designs which the Wezir had described to him, they took leave of the gardener, and returned to their abode.

There they sat conversing together; and Taj-el-Muluk said to 'Aziz, O my brother, recite to me some verses: perhaps my heart may thereby be dilated, and these troubling reflections may be dispelled, and the flame that is in my heart be quenched. And upon this, 'Aziz, with charming modulations, chanted these verses:—

Ibn-Sina* hath asserted that the lover's remedy consisteth in melodious sounds,
 And the company of one like his beloved, and the pleasures of a dessert and wine and a garden:
 But I have taken another in thy stead to cure myself, and fate and contingency aided me:
 Yet I found that love was a mortal disease, for which Ibn-Sina's medicine was vain.

Meanwhile, the old woman remained alone in her house; and the lady Dunya longed to divert herself in the garden; but she used not to go forth save with the old woman: so she sent to her, and conciliated her, and soothed her mind, and said to her, I desire to go out into the garden, to amuse myself with the sight of its trees and fruits, and that my heart may be dilated by its flowers. The old woman replied, I hear and obey; but I would first go to my house and dress myself, and I will be with thee again.—Go, then, to thy house, rejoined the lady Dunya; but be not long absent from me. The old woman, therefore, went forth from her, and repaired to Taj-el-Muluk, and said to him, Make ready, and clothe thyself in the richest of thine apparel, and betake thyself to the garden, and go in to the gardener and salute him, and then conceal thyself in the garden. He replied, I hear and obey. And she agreed with him respecting a sign to be made; after which she returned to the lady Dunya. And when she had gone, the Wezir arose, and clad Taj-el-Muluk in a suit of the most magnificent of the apparel of Kings, worth five thousand pieces of gold, and girded him with a girdle of gold set with jewels, and repaired to the garden. On arriving at its gate, they found the superintendent sitting there; and when he saw Taj-el-Muluk,

* Avicenna.

he rose to him, standing upon his feet, and, receiving him with reverence and honour, opened to him the gate, and said to him, Enter, and divert thyself in the garden. But the gardener knew not that the King's daughter would enter the garden that day. And when Taj-el-Muluk had gone in, he waited but a short time, and heard a noise; and before he knew the cause, the eunuchs and female slaves came forth from the private door; and as soon as the superintendent beheld them, he went and acquainted Taj-el-Muluk with their coming, saying to him, O my lord, what is to be done, now that the King's daughter, the lady Dunya, hath come? He answered, No harm will befall thee; for I will conceal myself in some place in the garden. So the gardener charged him to use the utmost caution in concealing himself, and left him, and departed.

And when the King's daughter, with her female slaves and the old woman, entered the garden, the old woman said within herself, If the eunuchs be with us, we shall not attain our wish. So she said to the King's daughter, O my mistress, I would propose to thee a thing productive of ease to thy heart. And the lady Dunya replied, Propose what thou wilt. The old woman therefore said, O my mistress, thou hast no need of these eunuchs at the present time; nor will thy heart be dilated as long as they are with us: so dismiss them from us.—Thou hast spoken truly, replied the lady Dunya:—and she dismissed them; and a little while after, as she was walking, Taj-el-Muluk beheld her, and gazed at her beauty and loveliness, while she knew it not; and every time that he looked at her he fainted, by reason of her surpassing beauty. The old woman in the meantime led her on by conversation to the pavilion which the Wezir had ordered to be painted; and, entering this pavilion, the lady Dunya took a view of its paintings, and saw the birds and the fowler and the pigeons; whereupon she exclaimed, Extolled be the perfection of God! Verily this is the representation of what I beheld in my dream!—And she continued gazing at the figures of the birds and the fowler and the snare, full of wonder; and said, O my nurse, I used to censure men, and hate them; but see the fowler, how he hath killed the female bird, and the male hath escaped, and

desired to return to the female to liberate her, but the bird of prey hath met him and captured him. The old woman, however, affected ignorance to her, and proceeded to divert her with talk until they both approached the place where Taj-el-Muluk was concealed ; upon which she made a sign to him that he should walk beneath the windows of the pavilion ; and while the lady Dunya stood there, she looked aside, and saw him, and, observing the beauty of his face, and his elegant form, she said, O my nurse, whence is this handsome youth ? The old woman answered, I know him not ; but I imagine that he is the son of a great King ; for he is of the utmost beauty and loveliness. And the lady Dunya was enraptured with him. The spells that bound her were dissolved, her reason was overcome by his beauty and loveliness and his elegant person, and she was affected by violent love : so she said to the old woman, O my nurse, verily this young man is handsome. The old woman replied, Thou hast spoken truth, O my mistress. And she made a sign to the King's son to return to his house. The fire of desire flamed within him, and his rapture and distraction became excessive ; but he went, and bade farewell to the superintendent, and departed to his abode, that he might not disobey the old woman, and acquainted the Wezir and 'Aziz that she had made a sign to him to depart. And they both exhorted him to be patient, saying to him, If the old woman did not know that there was an object to be attained by thy return, she had not made a sign to thee to do so.

Now to return to the lady Dunya.—Desire overcame her, and her rapture and distraction increased ; so she said to the old woman, I know not how to obtain an interview with this young man but through thy means. The old woman exclaimed, I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the accursed ! Thou hast no desire for men ; and how, then, have fears affected thee in consequence of the love of him ? But, by Allah, none other than he is suited to thy youth.—O my nurse, rejoined the lady Dunya, assist me to obtain an interview with him, and thou shalt receive from me a thousand pieces of gold, and a dress of the same value : if thou assist me not to gain him, I shall die inevitably. So the old woman replied, Go thou to thy palace, and I will

devise means to bring you together, and give my life to satisfy you both. The lady Dunya then returned to her palace, while the old woman repaired to Taj-el-Muluk; and when he saw her, he rose to her, and stood, and received her with respect and honour, seating her by his side; and she said to him, The stratagem hath succeeded. She then related to him what had occurred between her and the lady Dunya; and he said to her, When shall be the interview? She answered, To-morrow. And he gave her a thousand pieces of gold, and a garment of the same value: and she took them, and departed, and stopped not until she went in to the lady Dunya, who said to her, O my nurse, what news hast thou brought from the beloved?—I have discovered his abode, she answered; and to-morrow I will bring him to thee. And at this the lady Dunya rejoiced, and gave her a thousand pieces of gold, and a garment of the same value; and she took them, and returned to her house.

She passed the next night, and in the morning she went forth and repaired to Taj-el-Muluk, and, having clad him in women's apparel, said to him, Walk behind me, and incline thy body from side to side as thou steppest, and proceed not with a hasty pace, nor take notice of any one who may speak to thee. And after she had thus charged him, she went forth, and he behind her in his female attire; and she proceeded to instruct him, on the way, how to act, that he might not fear. She continued on her way, he following her, until they arrived at the entrance of the palace, when she entered, and he also after her, and she passed through successive doors and antechambers until she had conducted him through seven doors. And when she arrived at the seventh door, she said to Taj-el-Muluk, Fortify thy heart, and if I call out to thee, and say to thee, O slave-girl, advance!—be not tardy in thy pace, but hasten on, and when thou hast entered the antechamber beyond, look to thy left: thou wilt see a saloon with seven doors; and do thou count five doors, and enter the sixth; for within it is the object of thy desire.—And whither goest thou? said Taj-el-Muluk. She answered, I have no place to go to; but perhaps I may wait after thee and speak with the chief eunuch. She then proceeded, and he followed her, until

they arrived at the door where was the chief eunuch ; and he saw with her Taj-el-Muluk in the attire of a female slave, and said to her, What is the business of this slave-girl who is with thee? She answered him, The lady Dunya hath heard that this girl is skilled in different kinds of work, and she desireth to purchase her. But the eunuch replied, I know neither slave-girl nor any other person ; and no one shall enter without being searched by me, as the King hath commanded me. Upon this, the old woman, manifesting anger, said to him, I knew that thou wast a man of sense and of good manners ; and if thou art changed I will acquaint her with this, and inform her that thou hast offered opposition to her female slave. She then called out to Taj-el-Muluk, and said to him, Advance, O slave-girl! And immediately he entered the antechamber, as she had commanded him, and the eunuch was silent, and said no more. So Taj-el-Muluk counted five doors, and entered the sixth, and found the lady Dunya standing expecting him.

As soon as she beheld him, she knew him, and pressed him to her bosom, and he embraced her in like manner ; and the old woman, coming in to them, contrived a pretext to dismiss the female slaves ; after which the lady Dunya said to her, Be thou keeper of the door. She then remained alone with Taj-el-Muluk, and they passed the whole night in innocent dalliance. And on the following morning she closed the door upon him and the old woman, and entering another apartment, sat there according to her custom ; and her female slaves came to her, and she transacted their affairs and conversed with them, and then said to them, Go forth from me now ; for I desire to amuse myself in solitude. So they left her, and she returned to Taj-el-Muluk and the old woman, taking with her some food for them ; and thus they ceased not to do for a whole month.

As to the Wezir, however, and 'Aziz, when Taj-el-Muluk had gone to the palace of the King's daughter and remained all this time, they concluded that he would never return from it, and that he was inevitably lost ; and 'Aziz said to the Wezir, O my father, what wilt thou do? The Wezir answered, O my son, this affair is one of difficulty, and if we return not to his father to acquaint him, he will blame

us for our negligence. So they prepared themselves immediately, and journeyed towards El-Ard el-Khadra and El-'Amudeyn and the royal residence of the King Suleyman Shah, and traversed the valleys night and day until they went in and presented themselves before the King Suleyman Shah; and they informed him of that which had happened to his son, and that they had learnt no news of him since he had entered the palace of the King's daughter. On hearing this, he was as though the day of resurrection had surprised him: his sorrow was intense, and he gave orders to make a proclamation of war throughout his dominions. He then sent forth his troops outside the city, and caused the tents to be pitched for them, and remained in his pavilion until the forces had assembled from all the quarters of his kingdom. His subjects loved him for his great justice and beneficence, and he departed with an army that covered the earth as far as the eye could reach, for the purpose of demanding his son Taj-el-Muluk.

In the meantime, Taj-el-Muluk and the lady Dunya continued together for half a year, every day increasing in mutual love; and the love and distraction and rapture of Taj-el-Muluk so augmented that he opened to her his mind, and said to her, Know, O beloved of my heart, that the longer I remain with thee, the more do my distraction and ecstasy and desire increase; for I have not altogether attained my wish. So she said, What dost thou wish, O light of my eye, and delight of my heart? He answered, I desire to acquaint thee with my true history: know, then, that I am not a merchant, but a King, son of a King, and the name of my father is the Supreme King Suleyman Shah, who sent the Wezir as ambassador to thy father to demand thee for me in marriage; and when the news came to thee thou refusedst to consent.—He then related to her his story from first to last; and added, I desire now to repair to my father, that he may send an ambassador again to thy father, to demand thee in marriage from him, and so we shall remain at ease.—And when she heard this, she rejoiced exceedingly: for it coincided with her wish; and they passed the next night determined upon this proceeding.

But it happened, in accordance with destiny, that sleep

overcame them unusually that night, and they remained until the sun had risen. The King Shah-Zeman was then upon his royal seat, with the emirs of his empire before him, and the chief of the goldsmiths presented himself, having in his hand a large round casket: and he advanced, and, opening it before the King, took forth from it an elegant box worth a hundred thousand pieces of gold for the jewels it contained, and rubies and emeralds, such as no King of the earth could procure. And when the King saw it, he wondered at its beauty; and he looked towards the chief eunuch, to whom the affair with the old woman had happened (as above described), and said to him, O Kafur, take this box, and go with it to the lady Dunya. So the eunuch took it, and proceeded until he arrived at the chamber of the King's daughter, when he found its door closed, and the old woman sleeping at its threshold, and he exclaimed, Until this hour are ye sleeping? And when the old woman heard what he said, she awoke from her sleep, and, in her fear of him, said, Wait until I bring the key. She then went forth and fled. The eunuch, therefore, knew that she was alarmed, and he displaced the door, and, entering the chamber, found the lady Dunya asleep with Taj-el-Muluk. At the sight of this, he was perplexed at his case, and was meditating to return to the King, when the lady Dunya awoke, and found him by her; and she was troubled, and her countenance became pale, and she said, O Kafur, veil what God hath veiled. But he replied, I cannot conceal anything from the King. And he closed the door upon them, and returned to the King. So the King said to him, Hast thou given the box to thy mistress? The eunuch answered, Take the box: here it is. I cannot conceal from thee anything. Know that I beheld, with the lady Dunya, a handsome young man, sleeping in the same chamber. The King therefore ordered that they should both be brought before him; and when they had come into his presence, he said to them, What are these deeds? And he was violently enraged, and, seizing a dagger,¹⁰ was about to strike with it Taj-el-Muluk; but the lady Dunya¹¹ threw her head upon him, and said to her father, Slay me before him. The King, however, chid her, and ordered them to

convey her back to her chamber. Then looking towards Taj-el-Muluk, he said to him, Wo to thee ! Whence art thou, and who is thy father, and what hath emboldened thee to act thus towards my daughter ?—Know, O King, answered Taj-el-Muluk, that, if thou put me to death, thou wilt perish, and thou and all in thy dominions will repent.—And why so ? said the King. He answered, Know that I am the son of the King Suleyman Shah, and thou wilt not be aware of the consequence when he will approach thee with his horsemen and his infantry. And when King Shah-Zeman heard this, he desired to defer putting him to death ; and to imprison him until he should see whether his assertion were true ; but his Wezir said to him, O King of the age, it is my advice that thou hasten the execution of this young wretch, since he hath been guilty of presumption towards the daughters of Kings. So he said to the executioner, Strike off his head ; for he is a traitor. And the executioner took him, and, having bound him firmly, raised his hand, and made a sign of consultation to the emirs a first and a second time, desiring by this that some delay might take place ; but the King called out to him, How long wilt thou consult ? If thou do so again I will strike off thy head.

The executioner, therefore, raised his hand until his arm-pit appeared, and was about to strike off his head, when loud cries were heard, and the people closed their shops. So the King said to the executioner, Hasten not. And he sent a person to learn the news for him ; and the messenger went, and, soon returning, said to the King, I beheld an army like the roaring sea agitated with waves ; their horses are prancing, and the earth trembled beneath them, and I know not wherefore they are come. And the King was amazed, and feared lest he should be deposed from his throne. He then said to his Wezir, Have none of our troops gone forth to meet this army ? But his words were not finished when his chamberlains came in to him, accompanied by the messengers of the approaching King, and among them was the Wezir who had been with Taj-el-Muluk. He commenced by salutation ; and the King rose to him, and, calling them near to him, asked them respecting

the cause of their coming : whereupon the Wezir advanced from among them, and approached the King, and said to him, Know that he who hath alighted in thy territories is a King not like the Kings who have preceded him, nor like the Sultans of former times.—And who is he? said the King. The Wezir answered, He is the lord of justice and security, the fame of whose magnanimity the caravans have spread abroad, the Sultan Suleyman Shah, the lord of El-Ard el-Khadra and El-'Amudeyn and the mountains of Ispahan, who loveth justice and equity, and hateth tyranny and oppression ; and he saith to thee, that his son is in thy dominions and in thy city, and he is the vital spirit of his heart, and its delight ; and if he find him in safety, it is what he desireth, and thou wilt be thanked and praised ; but if he be not found in thy country, or if any evil have befallen him, receive tidings of destruction and of the ruin of thy territories ; for thy country shall become a desert in which the raven shall croak. Thus I have delivered to thee the message ; and peace be on thee.—When the King Shah-Zeman heard these words of the envoy, his heart was troubled, and he feared for his kingdom, and called out to the lords of his empire, and his wezirs and chamberlains and lieutenants ; and when they had come before him he said to them, Wo unto you ! Go down and search for this young man.—But he was under the hand of the executioner, and his appearance was changed through the fear that he suffered. The Wezir then, looking aside, found the King's son upon the skin of blood,* and he recognised him, and arose, and threw himself upon him. So also did the other messengers : they then unbound him, and kissed his hands and his feet ; whereupon Taj-el-Muluk opened his eyes, and, recognising the Wezir and his companion 'Aziz, fell down in a swoon through the excess of his joy at their presence.

The King Shah-Zeman was perplexed at his situation, and in great fear, on discovering that the coming of the army was on account of this young man ; and he arose and walked forward to Taj-el-Muluk, and kissed his head, and,

* A skin in Eastern palaces used to receive the head and blood of the decapitated.

with weeping eyes, said to him, O my son, be not angry with me: be not angry with the evil-doer for his deed; but have compassion on my gray hairs, and lay not waste my dominions. And Taj-el-Muluk approached him, and kissed his hand, saying to him, No harm shall befall thee; for thou art in my estimation as my father; but beware that no evil befall my beloved, the lady Dunya.—O my lord, rejoined the King, fear not for her; for nought but happiness awaiteth her. And he proceeded to excuse himself to him, and to soothe the mind of the Wezir of the King Suleyman Shah, promising him a large sum of money that he might conceal from the King what he had seen; after which he ordered the grandees of his empire to take Taj-el-Muluk and to conduct him to the bath, to clothe him in a suit of the best of royal apparel, and bring him back quickly. So they did this: they conducted him into the bath, and, having clad him in the suit which the King Shah-Zeman had allotted him, brought him back to the hall of audience; and when he came in, the King rose to him, he and all the lords of his empire, and they all stood to wait upon him. Then Taj-el-Muluk sat and conversed with his father's Wezir and with 'Aziz respecting the events which had happened to him; and they replied, During that period we went to thy father, and informed him that thou hadst entered the palace of the King's daughter, and not come forth from it, and that thy case appeared doubtful to us; and when he heard this, he made ready the troops, and we came to this country, and on our arrival have experienced joy and happiness. So he said to them, Good fortune hath attended your actions, first and last.

The King, in the meantime, had gone in to his daughter, the lady Dunya, and found her weeping for Taj-el-Muluk. She had taken a sword, and put its hilt to the floor, and its point to the middle of her bosom, and was leaning over it, saying, I must kill myself, and not live after my beloved. When her father, therefore, went in to her, and beheld her in this state, he called out to her, and said, O mistress of the daughters of Kings, do it not; but have mercy upon thy father and the people of thy country! Then advancing to her, he said to her, I conjure thee to abstain, lest evil

befall thy father on thy account. And he acquainted her with the case, telling her that her beloved, the son of the King Suleyman Shah, desired to celebrate his marriage with her, and adding, The affair of the betrothal and marriage is committed to thy judgment. And she smiled, and said to him, Did I not tell thee that he was the son of a Sultan? I will make him crucify thee upon a piece of wood worth a couple of pieces of silver.—I conjure thee by Allah, he exclaimed, that thou have mercy upon thy father!—Go to him, she rejoined, and bring him to me. He replied, On the head and the eye. And he returned from her quickly, and, going in to Taj-el-Muluk, rejoiced him by what he said. He then arose with him, and went to her again; and when she beheld Taj-el-Muluk, she embraced him in the presence of her father, and clung to him, and said to him, Thou hast made me desolate by thine absence. Then looking at her father, she said, Can any one act injuriously towards such a person as this handsome youth, and he a King, a son of a King? And upon this the King Shah-Zeman went forth, and closed the door upon them, and, repairing to the Wezir and the other messengers of the father of Taj-el-Muluk, ordered them to inform the Sultan Suleyman Shah that his son was in prosperity and health, and enjoying a life of the utmost delight. He gave orders also to carry forth provisions and pay to the troops of the Sultan Suleyman Shah; and after they had conveyed all that he commanded them to take forth, he brought out a hundred coursers, and a hundred dromedaries, and a hundred memluks, and a hundred concubine slaves, and a hundred male black slaves, and a hundred female slaves, and sent them all to him as a present.

He then repaired to him, with the lords of his empire, and his chief attendants, and they proceeded until they arrived outside the city; and when the Sultan Suleyman Shah became acquainted with this, he advanced some paces to meet him. The Wezir and 'Aziz had informed him of the news, and he rejoiced, and exclaimed, Praise be to God who hath granted my son the accomplishment of his wish! And he embraced the King Shah-Zeman, and seated him by his side upon the couch, and they conversed together; after

which the attendants placed before them the food, and when they had eaten to satisfaction they brought them the sweet-meats. Soon after, Taj-el-Muluk came, approaching in his rich and ornamented dress ; and when his father beheld him, he rose to him and kissed him, and all who were present rose to him ; and after he had sat with them a while conversing, the King Suleyman Shah said, I desire to perform my son's contract of marriage to thy daughter in the presence of witnesses. And King Shah-Zeman replied, I hear and obey. So he summoned the Kadi and witnesses, and they came, and wrote the marriage-contract ; and the troops rejoiced at this. And King Shah-Zeman began to fit out his daughter.

Then Taj-el-Muluk said to his father, Verily, 'Aziz is a generous person ; he hath performed for me a great service, and wearied himself, and journeyed with me, and enabled me to attain the object of my search, ceasing not to exhort me to patience until I accomplished my wish, and he hath been with us two years separated from his country : it is my desire, therefore, that we should prepare for him merchandise ; for his country is near. His father replied, Thy opinion is excellent. So they prepared for him a hundred loads of the most costly stuffs ; and Taj-el-Muluk bade him farewell, saying to him, O my brother, accept this as a present. And he accepted it, and kissed the ground before him and before his father. Taj-el-Muluk then mounted his horse, and proceeded with 'Aziz for the space of three miles ; after which, 'Aziz conjured him to return, and said, Were it not for my mother, I could not endure thy separation ; and by Allah, I entreat thee not to cease acquainting me with thy state. Having thus said, he bade him farewell, and repaired to his city. He found that his mother had built for him a tomb in the midst of the house, and she frequently visited it ; and when he entered the house, he found that she had dishevelled her hair and spread it upon the tomb, and, with streaming eyes, was reciting these verses :—

By Allah, O tomb, have his charms perished ; and hath that brilliant countenance changed ?

O tomb, thou art neither a garden nor a firmament : how then can the full moon and flowers be united in thee ?

She then groaned, and recited some other verses ; but before she had finished, 'Aziz went in to her : and when she beheld him, she rose to him and embraced him, and asked him respecting his long absence : so he acquainted her with all the events that had happened to him from first to last, and told her that Taj-el-Muluk had given him, of wealth and stuffs, a hundred loads ; and she rejoiced at this.—Such was the history of 'Aziz.

Now as to Taj-el-Muluk, he returned to his beloved, the lady Dunya, and King Shah-Zeman fitted her out for the journey with her husband and her father-in-law ; he sent to them provisions and presents and rarities, and they loaded their beasts and departed ; and King Shah-Zeman accompanied them three days' journey to bid them farewell. The King Suleyman Shah then conjured him to return : so he returned ; and Taj-el-Muluk and his father and his wife continued their journey night and day until they came in sight of their country. The city was decorated for them, and they entered it ; and the King Suleyman Shah sat upon his throne with his son Taj-el-Muluk by his side ; and he gave presents, and liberated the persons confined in the prisons ; after which he celebrated for his son a second wedding-festivity : the songs and instrumental music were continued for a whole month, and the tire-women crowded around the lady Dunya, and she was not tired with the display, nor were they with gazing at her. Taj-el-Muluk then took up his abode with her, after an interview with his father and mother together ; and they passed a life of the utmost delight and enjoyment.

FABLES

THE FABLE OF THE PEACOCK AND PEAHEN, THE DUCK, THE YOUNG LION, THE ASS, THE HORSE, THE CAMEL, AND THE CARPENTER, ETC. *

THERE was, in ancient times, a peacock who resorted to the sea-side with his mate. This place abounded with savage beasts, and all other wild animals were there, but it also abounded with trees and rivers; and the peacock with his mate roosted by night in one of those trees, through their fear of the wild beasts, in the morning betaking themselves to seek their sustenance. Thus they continued until, their fear increasing, they sought another place in which to reside; and while they were searching for it, an island appeared before them, with many trees and rivers. So they took up their abode in this island, and ate of its fruits, and drank of its rivers. And as they were thus living, lo, a duck approached them, in a state of great terror, and advanced without stopping until she came to the tree upon which was the peacock with his mate; whereupon she felt secure. The peacock, therefore, doubted not but that this duck had a wonderful story to tell; and he asked her respecting her state, and the reason of her fear. She answered, I am sick with grief, and my fear is of the son of Adam. Beware then, beware of the sons of Adam.—So the peacock said to her, Fear not, now that thou hast come unto us. And the duck replied, Praise be to God who hath dispelled my anxiety and grief by your vicinity! I have come in the desire of gaining your affection.—And when she had uttered these words, the peacock's mate descended to her, and said to her, Welcome to friendship and ease and amplitude! No evil awaiteth thee. And how can the son of Adam obtain access to us when we are in this island in the midst of the sea? From the land he cannot reach us, and from the sea he cannot come up against us. Rejoice, therefore, at this announcement, and tell us what hath befallen thee from the son of Adam.

So the duck said, Know, O peahen, that I have passed all my life in this island in safety, and seen nothing disagreeable, till I slept one

* The long story from which the contents of chapter viii. are extracted terminates with Night 145. It is followed by several moral fables, extending to the end of Night 152. Two of these I have translated, and here insert. The rest are short, and very inferior.

night, and beheld in my sleep the figure of a son of Adam, who conversed with me, and I conversed with him. But I heard a speaker say to me, O duck, beware of the son of Adam, and be not deceived by his words, nor by his suggestions to thee; for he aboundeth with stratagems and guile. Beware then, be fully aware, of his craftiness; for he is guileful and crafty as the poet hath said of him,—

With his tongue he will offer thee sweet expressions; but he will elude thee like the fox.

And know that the son of Adam circumventeth the fish, and draweth them out from the waters, and shooteth the birds with an earthen bullet,* and entrappeth the elephant by his craftiness. No one is secure from the mischief of the son of Adam, and neither bird nor wild beast can escape from him. Thus I have acquainted thee with that which I have heard respecting the son of Adam.—So I awoke from my sleep fearful and terrified; and to the present time my heart hath not become dilated, through my fear for myself from the son of Adam, lest he surprise me by his artifice, and catch me in his snares. When the close of day overtook me, my strength was impaired and my energy failed.

I then felt a desire to eat and drink. I therefore went walking forth, with a troubled mind and a contracted heart, and, arriving at yonder mountain, I found, at the entrance of a cave, a young lion, of yellow colour. When this young lion beheld me, he rejoiced exceedingly at my arrival; my colour and my elegant form pleased him, and he called out to me, saying, Draw near to me: and on my approaching him he said to me, What is thy name, and what is thy genus? I therefore answered, My name is duck, and I am of the genus of birds. And I then said to him, What is the reason of thy sojourning until the present time in this place? The young lion answered, The reason of it is, that my father the lion hath been for days cautioning me against the son of Adam; and it happened that I beheld last night in my sleep the figure of a son of Adam. Then the young lion related to me the like of that which I have related unto thee; and when I heard his words I said to him, O lion, I have had recourse unto thee that thou mayest slay the son of Adam, and be resolved upon his slaughter; for I fear for myself extremely from him, and my fear is increased from seeing that thou also fearest the son of Adam although thou art Sultan of the wild beasts.—I ceased not, O my sister, to caution the young lion against the son of Adam, and to urge him to slay him, until he rose suddenly from the place where he was, and walked forth, I walking behind him; and he lashed his back with his tail.

He proceeded, and I behind him, down the road; and we found a dust raised, which subsided, and there appeared in the midst of it a run-away, naked ass, now galloping and running, and now rolling on the ground. When the lion beheld him he called out to him: so the ass came to him submissively: and the lion said to him, O thou animal of infatuated mind, what is thy genus, and what is the reason of thy

* This seems to allude to the cross-bow.

coming unto this place?—O son of the Sultan, answered the ass, as to my genus, I am an ass; and the reason of my coming to this place is my flight from the son of Adam. So the young lion said, And art thou also afraid of the son of Adam that he should kill thee? The ass answered, No, O son of the Sultan; but my fear is lest he employ a stratagem against me, and ride me; for he hath a thing called the pad, which he placeth on my back, and a thing called the girth, which he draweth round my belly, and a thing called the crupper, which he inserteth beneath my tail, and a thing called the bit, which he putteth in my mouth; and he maketh for me a goad, and goadeth me with it, and he requireth me to exert myself beyond my ability in running. When I stumble, he curseth me; and when I bray, he revileth me.* Afterwards, when I have grown old, and can no longer run, he putteth upon me a pack-saddle of wood, and committeth me to the water-sellers (sakkas), who load me with water upon my back from the river, in goat-skins, and in similar things, such as jars; and I cease not to suffer abasement and contempt and fatigue until I die, when they throw me upon the mounds of rubbish to the dogs. What then can be greater than this anxiety that I suffer, and what calamity is greater than these calamities that I endure?—Now when I heard, O peahen, the words of the ass, my flesh quaked with horror of the son of Adam, and I said to the young lion, O my master, the ass is excused, and his words have added to my terror. The young lion then said to the ass, Whither art thou going? The ass answered, I saw the son of Adam before sunrise at a distance, and I fled from him, and now I desire to depart, and to run without stopping, from the violence of my fear of him: perhaps I may find a place that will afford me an asylum from the perfidious son of Adam.

Now while the ass was conversing with the young lion on this subject, and was desirous of bidding us farewell, and departing, there appeared unto us a cloud of dust; whereupon the ass brayed and cried out, looking in the direction of the dust. And after a while, the dust dispersed, and discovered a black horse, with a white spot on his forehead like a dirhem. This horse, beautiful with the white spot on his forehead, handsomely marked with white next the hoof, with becoming legs, and neighing, stopped not in his course until he came before the young lion. And when the young lion beheld him, he admired him, and said to him, What is thy genus, O majestic wild beast, and what is

* The reason of this is, because the ass brays in consequence of his seeing the Devil.—“The last animal that entered with Nuh [or Noah, into the ark,] was the ass; and Iblis (whom God curse!) clung to his tail. The ass had just entered the ark, and began to be agitated, and could not enter further into the ark, whereupon Nuh said to him, ‘Enter, wo to thee!’ But the ass was still agitated, and was unable to advance. So Nuh said, ‘Enter, though the Devil be with thee.’ And the ass entered, and Iblis (whom God curse!) entered with him. And Nuh said, ‘O enemy of God, who introduced thee into the ark?’ He answered, ‘Thou: thou saidst unto the ass, Enter, though the Devil be with thee.’—So it is said that this is the reason why the ass, when he seeth the Devil, brayeth.” (Kitab-el-“Onwan fi Mekaid en-Niswan.)

the reason of thy fleeing away into this wide and extensive desert?—O lord of the wild beasts, answered the horse, I am one of the genus of horses, and the reason of my running away is my flight from the son of Adam. And the young lion wondered at the words of the horse, and replied, Say not thus, for it is disgraceful to thee. Thou art tall and stout; and how then fearest thou the son of Adam, notwithstanding the bulk of thy body, and the swiftness of thy running, when I, with the smallness of my body, have determined to encounter the son of Adam, to attack him, and eat his flesh, and to appease the terror of this poor duck, and establish her securely in her home? Now, on thy coming here, thou hast broken my heart by thy words, and deterred me from that which I desired to do; seeing that the son of Adam hath overcome thee, in spite of thy greatness, and feared not thy height and thy breadth, though, if thou kickedst him with thy hoof, thou wouldest kill him, and he could not prevail against thee; but thou wouldest make him to drink the cup of perdition.—But the horse laughed when he heard the words of the young lion, and said, Far, far is it from my power to overcome him, O son of the King! Let not my height nor breadth nor my bulk deceive thee with respect to the son of Adam, for, in the excess of his artifice and his craftiness he maketh for me a thing called a tethering-rope, and putteth to my four feet two tethering-ropes of cords made of the fibres of the palm-tree, wound round with felt, and attacheth me by my head to a high stake. I remain standing, thus attached, unable to lie down or to sleep. And when he desireth to ride me, he maketh for me a thing of iron into which to put his feet, called the stirrup, and placeth upon my back a thing called the saddle, binding it with two girths under the hollow of my forelegs; and he putteth in my mouth a thing of iron called the bit, affixing to it a strip of leather termed the bridle. Then when he rideth on my back, upon the saddle, he taketh hold of the bridle and guideth me with it, and striketh me on my flanks with the stirrups until he maketh them bleed. Ask not, O son of the Sultan, what I suffer from the son of Adam; for when I have grown old and lean, and am unable to run fleetly, he selleth me to the miller, to employ me in turning the mill, and I cease not to do so night and day, until I become infirm from age, when he selleth me to the butcher, who slaughtereth me; he strippeth off my skin and plucketh my tail and selleth them to the sieve-makers, and he melteth down my fat.—And when the young lion heard these words of the horse, he became more enraged and vexed, and said to him, When didst thou part from the son of Adam? He answered, I parted from him at midday, and he is following my tracks.

And while the young lion was thus talking with the horse, lo, a dust rose, and afterwards dispersed, and there appeared in the midst of it a furious camel, uttering a gurgling noise, and striking the ground with his feet. Thus he continued to do until he came up to us; and when the young lion beheld him, great and stout, he thought that he was the son of Adam, and was about to spring upon him; but I said to him, O son of the Sultan, this is not the son of Adam, but he is a camel; and it seemeth that he is fleeing from the son of Adam. And as I was thus engaged, O my sister, in speaking to the young lion, the

camel came before the young lion, and saluted him ; and he returned his salutation, and said to him, What is the reason of thy coming unto this place ? He answered, I have come fleeing from the son of Adam.—And thou, said the young lion, with thy huge make and height and breadth, how fearest thou the son of Adam, when, if thou kickedst him with thy foot, thou wouldst kill him.—O son of the Sultan, answered the camel, know that the son of Adam hath subtleties not to be supported, and nothing overcometh him but death ; for he putteth in my nose a string called a nose-ring, and upon my head he putteth a halter : then he committeth me to the least of his children, and the little child draweth me along by the string, notwithstanding my great bulk. They load me also with the heaviest burdens, and take me with them on long journeys. They employ me in difficult labours during the hours of the night and the day ; and when I have grown old, and have become disabled, my master no longer endureth my society ; but selleth me to the butcher, who slaughtereth me, and selleth my skin to the tanners, and my flesh to the cooks. Ask not, therefore, what I suffer from the son of Adam.—The young lion then said to him, At what hour didst thou part from the son of Adam ? He answered, I parted from him at the hour of sunset ; and I imagine that, coming to my place after my departure, and finding me not, he is on the way to seek me ; therefore suffer me, O son of the Sultan, to flee into the deserts and wastes. But the young lion replied, Wait a little, O camel, that you mayest see how I will tear him, and feed thee with his flesh, and break his bones, and drink his blood.—O son of the Sultan, rejoined the camel, I fear for thee from the son of Adam ; for he is guileful and crafty. And he recited the saying of the poet,—

When the severe alighteth in the land of a people, there is nothing for its inhabitants but to depart.

But as the camel was conversing thus with the young lion, lo, a dust rose, and after a while dispersed from around a short and thin old man. On his shoulder was a basket containing a set of carpenter's tools, upon his head was a branch of a tree, with eight planks, and he was leading by the hand young children, and walking at a brisk pace. He advanced without stopping until he drew near to the young lion ; and when I beheld him, O my sister, I fell down from the violence of my fear. But as to the young lion, he arose and walked forward to him and met him ; and when he came up to him, the carpenter laughed in his face, and said to him with an eloquent tongue, O glorious King, endowed with liberality, may Allah make thine evening and thine intention prosperous, and increase thy courage and thy power ! Protect me from him who hath afflicted me, and by his wickedness smitten me ; for I have found none to aid me but thee.—Then the carpenter stood before the lion, and wept and sighed and lamented. And when the young lion heard his weeping and lamenting, he said to him, I will protect thee from the object of thy dread. Who then is he who hath oppressed thee, and what art thou, O thou wild beast, the like of whom I have never in my life beheld, and than whom I have never seen any

of more handsome form nor any of more eloquent tongue ; and what is thy condition ?—So the carpenter answered, O lord of the wild beasts, as to myself, I am a carpenter ; and as to him who hath oppressed me, he is a son of Adam, and on the morning after this night he will be with thee in this place. And when the young lion heard these words from the carpenter, the light became converted into darkness before his face : he growled and snorted ; his eyes cast forth sparks ; and he cried out, saying, By Allah, I will remain awake this night until the morning, and will not return to my father until I accomplish my desire ! Then looking towards the carpenter, he said to him, I see thy steps to be short, and I cannot hurt thy feelings ; for I am endowed with generosity ; and I imagine that thou canst not keep pace in thy walk with the wild beasts : acquaint me, then, whither thou art going. The carpenter replied, Know that I am going to the wezir of thy father, to the lynx ; for, when it was told him that the son of Adam had trodden this region, he feared for himself greatly, and sent to me a messenger from among the wild beasts, that I might make for him a house in which he might reside, and find an asylum, and that should debar from him his enemy, so that no one of the sons of Adam might obtain access to him. Therefore, when the messenger came to me, I took these planks and set forth to him.

On hearing these words of the carpenter, the young lion became envious of the lynx, and said to him, By my life, thou must make for me a house with these planks before thou make for the lynx his house ; and when thou hast finished my work, go to the lynx, and make for him what he desireth. But when the carpenter heard what the young lion said, he replied, O lord of the wild beasts, I cannot make for thee anything until I have made for the lynx what he desireth : then I will come to serve thee, and make for thee a house that shall protect thee from thine enemy. The young lion, however, said, By Allah, I will not let thee go from this place until thou make for me a house with these planks. He then crept, and sprang upon the carpenter, desiring to jest with him, and struck him with his paw, throwing down the basket from his shoulder. The carpenter fell down in a swoon, and the young lion laughed at him, and said, Wo to thee, O carpenter ! Verily thou art weak, and without strength : so thou art excused for thy fearing the son of Adam.—But when the carpenter had fallen down upon his back, he became violently enraged. He however concealed this from the young lion, through his fear of him ; and afterwards, he sat and laughed in the face of the young lion, saying to him, Well, I will make for thee the house. So he took the planks that he had with him, and nailed together the house, making it to suit the measure of the young lion, and left its door open ; for he made it in the form of a chest. He made for it a large aperture with a cover pierced with numerous holes, and, taking forth some new nails, said to the young lion, Enter this house by this aperture, that I may arch it over thee. The young lion therefore rejoiced at this, and advanced to the aperture ; but he saw that it was narrow. The carpenter said to him, Enter, and crouch down upon thy four legs. And the lion accordingly did so, and entered the chest, but his tail remained outside. He then desired to draw

back and come forth ; but the carpenter said to him, Wait, that I may see if it will admit thy tail with thee. So the young lion complied with his directions ; and the carpenter, having folded the young lion's tail, and stuffed it into the chest, placed the cover upon the aperture quickly, and nailed it. The young lion cried out, saying, O carpenter, what is this narrow house that thou hast made for me ? Let me come forth from it.—But the carpenter replied, Far, far be it from thee ! Repentance for what hath passed will not avail ; for thou wilt not come forth from this place.—Then the carpenter laughed, and said to the young lion, Thou hast fallen into the cage, and become the basest of wild beasts.—O my brother, said the young lion, what is this discourse that thou addressest to me ?—Know, O dog of the desert, replied the carpenter, that thou hast fallen into the snare that thou fearedst : destiny hath overthrown thee, and caution will not avail thee.—So when the young lion heard his words, O my sister, he knew that he was the son of Adam, against whom his father had cautioned him when he was awake, and the invisible speaker in his sleep ; and I was convinced that this was he without doubt or uncertainty. I therefore feared him greatly for myself, and, retiring to a little distance from him, waited to see what he would do with the young lion. And I saw, O my sister, the son of Adam dig a trench in that place, near the chest in which was the young lion ; and he threw him into the trench, and threw wood upon him, and burnt him with fire. So my fear, O my sister, increased ; and for two days I have been fleeing from the son of Adam, in my fear of him.

The peahen, when she heard these words from the duck, wondered at them extremely, and said, O my sister, thou art now secure from the son of Adam ; for we are in one of the islands of the sea, to which the son of Adam bath no way of access ; therefore choose a residence with us until God make easy thy affair and ours. The duck replied, I fear that some nocturnal calamity may befall me ; and no fugitive slave can detach himself from fate. But the peahen rejoined, Reside with us, and be like us. And she continued to urge her until she did so ; and she said to the peahen, O my sister, thou knowest how little is my patience ; and if I had not seen thee here, I had not remained. The peahen replied, If anything be [written] on our forehead, we must experience its accomplishment ; and when our predestined end approacheth, who will deliver us ? A soul departeth not until it hath enjoyed the whole of its sustenance and its decreed period.—And while they were thus conversing, a cloud of dust approached them ; whereupon the duck cried out, and descended into the sea, saying, Beware, beware, though there be no refuge from destiny ! The dust was great ; but as it subsided, there appeared in the midst of it an antelope. So the duck and the peahen felt secure ; and the latter said to the duck, O my sister, that which thou fearest is an antelope, and see, he hath approached us : no harm will befall us from him ; for the antelope eateth the herbs which spring from the earth ; and as thou art of the genus of birds, he is of the genus of wild beasts : therefore feel secure, and be not anxious ; since anxiety wasteth the body. And the peahen had not finished her words when the antelope came up to them to shade himself beneath the tree ; and on beholding the peahen and the duck, he saluted them, and

said to them, I have entered this island to-day, and have seen no place more fruitful than it, nor any more pleasant as an abode. He then invited them to keep him company and to treat him with sincere friendship ; and when the duck and the peahen saw his affection for them, they addressed him kindly, and became desirous of his society. They swore to be faithful friends, one to another, and they passed the night together, and ate together. Thus they continued in safety, eating and drinking, until there passed by them a vessel that was wandering from its course in the sea. It anchored near them, and the people came forth, and dispersed themselves in the island, and, seeing the antelope and the peahen and the duck together, they approached them. So the antelope fled into the desert, and the peahen soared into the sky ; but the duck remained infatuated, and they continued to run after her until they captured her, when she cried out, saying, Caution is of no avail to me against fate and destiny ! And they departed with her to their vessel.

The antelope and the peahen mourned incessantly for the loss of the duck, and concluded that her unhappy end was occasioned by her neglecting to repeat the praises of God ; for it is the general practice of everything that God hath created to celebrate his praises, and the neglect of doing so causeth its destruction.

THE FABLE OF THE FOX AND THE WOLF

A fox and a wolf inhabited the same den, resorting thither together, and thus they remained a long time. But the wolf oppressed the fox ; and it so happened that the fox counselled the wolf to assume benignity, and to abandon wickedness, saying to him, If thou persevere in thine arrogance, probably God will give power over thee to a son of Adam ; for he is possessed of stratagems, and artifice, and guile : he captureth the birds from the sky, and the fish from the sea, and cutteth the mountains and transporteth them ; and all this he accomplisheth through his stratagems. Betake thyself, therefore, to the practice of equity, and relinquish evil and oppression ; for it will be more pleasant to thy taste.—The wolf, however, received not his advice ; on the contrary, he returned him a rough reply, saying to him, Thou hast no right to speak on matters of magnitude and importance. He then gave the fox such a blow that he fell down senseless ; and when he recovered, he smiled in the wolf's face, apologizing for his shameful words, and recited these two verses :—

If I have been faulty in my affection for you, and committed a deed of a shameful nature,

I repent of my offence, and your clemency will extend to the evil-doer who craveth forgiveness.

So the wolf accepted his apology, and ceased from ill-treating him, but said to him, Speak not of that which concerneth thee not, lest thou

hear that which will not please thee. The fox replied, I hear and obey. I will abstain from that which pleaseth thee not ; for the sage hath said, Offer not information on a subject respecting which thou art not questioned ; and reply not to words when thou art not invited ; leave what concerneth thee not, to attend to that which *doth* concern thee ; and lavish not advice upon the evil, for they will recompense thee for it with evil.—And when the wolf heard these words of the fox, he smiled in his face ; but he meditated upon employing some artifice against him, and said, I must strive to effect the destruction of this fox. As to the fox, however, he bore patiently the injurious conduct of the wolf, saying within himself, Verily, insolence and calumny occasion destruction, and betray one into perplexity ; for it hath been said, He who is insolent suffereth injury, and he who is ignorant repenteth, and he who feareth is safe : moderation is one of the qualities of the noble, and good manners are the noblest gain. It is advisable to behave with dissimulation towards this tyrant, and he will inevitably be overthrown.—He then said to the wolf, Verily the Lord pardoneth and becometh propitious unto his servant when he hath sinned ; and I am a weak slave, and have committed a transgression in offering thee advice. Had I foreknown the pain that I have suffered from thy blow, I had known that the elephant could not withstand nor endure it ; but I will not complain of the pain of that blow, on account of the happiness that hath resulted unto me from it ; for, if it had a severe effect upon me, its result was happiness ; and the sage hath said, The beating inflicted by the preceptor is at first extremely grievous ; but in the end it is sweeter than clarified honey.—So the wolf said, I forgive thine offence, and cancel thy fault ; but beware of my power, and confess thyself my slave ; for thou hast experienced my severity unto him who sheweth me hostility. The fox, therefore, prostrated himself before him, saying to him, May God prolong thy life, and mayest thou not cease to subdue him who opposeth thee ! And he continued to fear the wolf, and to dissemble towards him.

After this, the fox went one day to a vineyard, and saw in its wall a breach ; but he suspected it, saying within himself, There must be some cause for this breach ; and it hath been said, Whoso seeth a hole in the ground, and doth not shun it and be cautious of advancing to it boldly, exposeth himself to danger and destruction. It is well known that some men make a figure of the fox in the vineyard, and even put before it grapes in plates, in order that a fox may see it, and advance to it, and fall into destruction. Verily I regard this breach as a snare ; and it hath been said, Caution is the half of cleverness. Caution requireth me to examine this breach, and to see if I can find there anything that may lead to perdition. Covetousness doth not induce me to throw myself into destruction.—He then approached it, and, going round about examining it warily, beheld it ; and lo, there was a deep pit, which the owner of the vineyard had dug to catch in it the wild beasts that despoiled the vines ; and he observed over it a slight covering. So he drew back from it, and said, Praise be to God that I regarded it with caution ! I hope that my enemy, the wolf, who hath made my life miserable, may fall into it ; so that I alone may enjoy

absolute power over the vineyard, and live in it securely! Then, shaking his head, and uttering a loud laugh, he merrily sang these verses:—

Would that I beheld at the present moment, in this well, a wolf
Who hath long afflicted my heart, and made me drink bitterness
perforce!
Would that my life may be spared, and that the wolf may meet his
death!
Then the vineyard will be free from his presence, and I shall find in it
my spoil.

Having finished his song, he hurried away until he came to the wolf, when he said to him, Verily God hath smoothed for thee the way to the vineyard without fatigue. This hath happened through thy good fortune. Mayest thou enjoy, therefore, that to which God hath granted thee access, in smoothing thy way to that plunder and that abundant sustenance without any difficulty!—So the wolf said to the fox, What is the proof of that which thou hast declared? The fox answered, I went to the vineyard, and found that its owner had died; and I entered the garden, and beheld the fruits shining upon the trees.

So the wolf doubted not the words of the fox, and in his eagerness he arose, and went to the breach. His cupidity had deceived him with vain hopes, and the fox stopped and fell down behind him as one dead, applying this verse as a proverb suited to the case:—

Dost thou covet an interview with Leyla? It is covetousness that causeth the loss of men's heads.

And when the wolf came to the breach, the fox said to him, Enter the vineyard; for thou art spared the trouble of breaking down the wall of the garden, and it remaineth for God to complete the benefit. So the wolf walked forward, desiring to enter the vineyard, and when he came to the middle of the covering of the hole, he fell into it; whereupon the fox was violently excited by happiness and joy; his anxiety and grief ceased, and, in merry tones, he sang these verses:—

Fortune hath compassionated my case, and felt pity for the length of my torment,
And granted me what I desired, and removed that which I dreaded.
I will therefore forgive its offences committed in former times;
Even the injustice it hath shewn in the turning of my hair gray.
There is no escape for the wolf from utter annihilation;
And the vineyard is for me alone, and I have no stupid partner.

He then looked into the pit, and beheld the wolf weeping in his repentance and sorrow for himself, and the fox wept with him. So the wolf raised his head towards him, and said, Is it from thy compassion for me that thou hast wept, O Abu-l-Hoseyn?*—No, answered the fox; by

* A surname commonly given to the fox; and in some parts, an appellation always given to that animal instead of "tha'lab," which is in those parts applied to the jackal; but I believe that these two animals are often mistaken, one for the other. It signifies "Father (i.e. occupant) of the little fortress."

Him who cast thee into this pit ; but I wept for the length of thy past life, and in my regret at thy not having fallen into this pit before the present day. Hadst thou fallen into it before I met with thee, I had experienced refreshment and ease. But thou hast been spared to the expiration of thy decreed term and known period.—The wolf, however, said to him, Go, O evil-doer, to my mother, and acquaint her with that which hath happened to me : perhaps she will contrive some means for my deliverance. But the fox replied, The excess of thy covetousness and eager desire have entrapped thee into destruction, since thou hast fallen into a pit from which thou wilt never be saved. Knowest thou not, O ignorant wolf, that the author of the proverb saith, He who thinketh not of results will not be secure from perils ?—O Abu-l-Hoseyn, rejoined the wolf, thou wast wont to manifest an affection for me, and to desire my friendship, and fear the greatness of my power. Be not, then, rancorous towards me for that which I have done unto thee ; for he who hath one in his power and yet forgiveth will receive a recompence from God ; and the poet hath said,—

Sow good, even on an unworthy soil ; for it will not be fruitless wherever it is sown.

Verily, good, though it remain long buried, none will reap but he who sowed it.

—O most ignorant of the beasts of prey, said the fox, and most stupid of the wild beasts of the regions of the earth, hast thou forgotten thy haughtiness and insolence and pride, and thy disregarding the rights of companionship, and thy refusing to be advised by the saying of the poet ?—

Tyrannize not, if thou hast the power to do so ; for the tyrannical is in danger of revenges.

Thine eye will sleep while the oppressed, wakeful, will call down curses on thee, and God's eye sleepeth not.

—O Abu-l-Hoseyn, exclaimed the wolf, be not angry with me for my former offences ; for forgiveness is required of the generous, and kind conduct is among the best means of enriching oneself. How excellent is the saying of the poet !—

Haste to do good when thou art able ; for at every season thou hast not the power.

He continued to abase himself to the fox, and said to him, Perhaps thou canst find some means of delivering me from destruction. But the fox replied, O artful, guileful, treacherous wolf, hope not for deliverance ; for this is the recompence of thy base conduct, and a just retaliation. Then shaking his jaws with laughing, he recited these two verses :—

No longer attempt to beguile me ; for thou wilt not attain thine object. What thou seekest from me is impossible. Thou hast sown, and reap then, vexation.

—O gentle one among the beasts of prey, resumed the wolf, thou art in

my estimation more faithful than to leave me in this pit ! He then shed tears, and repeated this couplet :—

O thou whose favours to me have been many, and whose gifts have been more than can be numbered !

No misfortune hath ever yet befallen me but I have found thee ready to aid me in it.

The fox replied, O stupid enemy, how art thou reduced to humility and submissiveness, and abjection and obsequiousness, after thy disdain and pride, and tyranny and haughtiness ! I kept company with thee through fear of thine oppression, and flattered thee without a hope of conciliating thy kindness ; but now, terror hath affected thee, and punishment hath overtaken thee.—And he recited these two verses :—

O thou who seekest to beguile, thou hast fallen in thy base intention.

Taste, then, the pain of shameful calamity, and be with other wolves cut off.

—The wolf still entreated him, saying, O gentle one, speak not with the tongue of enmity, nor look with its eye ; but fulfil the covenant of fellowship with me before the time for discovering a remedy shall have passed. Arise and procure for me a rope, and tie one end of it to a tree, and let down to me its other end, that I may lay hold of it. Perhaps I may so escape from my present predicament, and I will give thee all the treasures that I possess.—The fox, however, replied, Thou hast prolonged a conversation that will not procure thy liberation. Hope not, therefore, for thine escape through my means ; but reflect upon thy former wicked conduct, and the perfidy and artifice which thou thoughtest to employ against me, and how near thou art to being stoned. Know that thy soul is about to quit the world, and to perish and depart from it : then wilt thou be reduced to destruction ; and an evil abode is it to which thou goest !—O Abu-l-Hoseyn, rejoined the wolf, be ready in returning to friendship, and be not so rancorous. Know that he who delivereth a soul from destruction hath saved it alive, and he who saveth a soul alive is as if he had saved the lives of all mankind.* Follow not a course of evil ; for the wise abhor it ; and there is no evil more manifest than my being in this pit, drinking the suffocating pains of death, and looking upon destruction, when thou art able to deliver me from the misery into which I have fallen.—But the fox exclaimed, O thou barbarous, hard-hearted wretch ! I compare thee, with respect to the fairness of thy professions and the baseness of thine intention, to the falcon with the partridge.—And what, asked the wolf, is the story of the falcon and the partridge ?

The fox answered, I entered a vineyard one day to eat of its grapes, and while I was there, I beheld a falcon pounce upon a partridge ; but when he had captured him, the partridge escaped from him and entered his nest, and concealed himself in it ; whereupon the falcon followed him, calling out to him, O idiot, I saw thee in the desert hungry, and, feeling compassion for thee, I gathered for thee some grain, and took hold of thee that thou mightest eat ; but thou fleddest from me, and I see no reason for thy flight unless it be to mortify. Shew thyself, then,

* Kur'an, v. 35.

and take the grain that I have brought thee, and eat it, and may it be light and wholesome to thee.—So when the partridge heard these words of the falcon, he believed him and came forth to him ; and the falcon stuck his talons into him, and got possession of him. The partridge, therefore, said to him, Is this that of which thou saidst that thou hadst brought it for me from the desert, and of which thou saidst to me, Eat it, and may it be light and wholesome to thee ? Thou hast lied unto me ; and may God make that which thou eatest of my flesh to be a mortal poison in thy stomach.—And when he had eaten it, his feathers fell off, and his strength failed, and he forthwith died.

The fox then continued, Know, O wolf, that he who diggeth a pit for his brother soon falleth into it himself ; and thou behavedst with perfidy to me first.—Cease, replied the wolf, from addressing me with this discourse, and propounding fables, and mention not unto me my former base actions. It is enough for me to be in this miserable state, since I have fallen into a calamity for which the enemy would pity me ; much more the true friend. Consider some stratagem by means of which I may save myself, and so assist me. If the doing this occasion thee trouble, thou knowest that the true friend endureth for his own true friend the severest labour, and will suffer destruction in obtaining the means of his deliverance ; and it hath been said, An affectionate friend is better than an own brother. If thou procure means for my escape, I will collect for thee such things as shall be a store for thee against the time of want, and then I will teach thee extraordinary stratagems by which thou shalt make the plenteous vineyards accessible, and shalt strip the fruitful trees : so be happy and cheerful.—But the fox said, laughing as he spoke, How excellent is that which the learned have said of him who is excessively ignorant like thee.—And what have the learned said ? asked the wolf. The fox answered, The learned have observed, that the rude in body and in disposition is far from intelligence, and nigh unto ignorance ; for thine assertion, O perfidious idiot, that the true friend undergoeth trouble for the deliverance of his own true friend, is just, as thou hast said ; but acquaint me with thine ignorance, and thy paucity of sense, how I should bear sincere friendship towards thee with thy treachery. Hast thou considered me a true friend unto thee, when I am an enemy who rejoiceth in thy misfortune ? These words are more severe than the piercing of arrows, if thou understand. And as to thy saying that thou wilt give me such things as will be a store for me against the time of want, and wilt teach me stratagems by which I shall obtain access to the plenteous vineyards, and strip the fruitful trees—how is it, O guileful traitor, that thou knowest not a stratagem by means of which to save thyself from destruction ? How far, then, art thou from profiting thyself, and how far am I from receiving thine advice ! If thou know of stratagems, employ them to save thyself from this predicament, from which I pray God to make thine escape far distant. See then, O idiot, if thou know any stratagem, and save thyself by its means from slaughter, before thou lavish instruction upon another. But thou art like a man whom a disease attacked, and to whom there came a man suffering from the same disease to cure him, saying to him, Shall I cure thee of thy disease ? The first man

therefore said to the other, Why hast thou not begun by curing thyself? So he left him and went his way.—And thou, O wolf, art in the same case. Remain then in thy place, and endure that which hath befallen thee.

Now when the wolf heard these words of the fox, he knew that he had no kindly feeling for him; so he wept for himself, and said, I have been careless of myself; but if God deliver me from this affliction, I will assuredly repent of my overbearing conduct unto him who is weaker than I; and I will certainly wear wool,* and ascend the mountains, commemorating the praises of God (whose name be exalted!), and fearing his punishment; and I will separate myself from all the other wild beasts; and verily I will feed the warriors in defence of the religion, and the poor.—Then he wept and lamented. And thereupon the heart of the fox was moved with tenderness for him. On hearing his humble expressions, and the words which indicated his repenting of arrogance and pride, he was affected with compassion for him, and, leaping with joy, placed himself at the brink of the pit, and sat upon his hind legs, and hung down his tail into the cavity. And upon this, the wolf arose, and stretched forth his paw towards the fox's tail, and pulled him down to him: so the fox was with him in the pit. The wolf then said to him, O fox of little compassion, wherefore didst thou rejoice in my misfortune? Now thou hast become my companion, and in my power. Thou hast fallen into the pit with me, and punishment hath quickly overtaken thee. The sages have said, If any one of you reproach his brother for deriving his nourishment from miserable means, he shall experience the same necessity:—and how excellent is the saying of the poet!—

When Fortune throweth itself heavily upon some, and encampeth by the side of others,

Say to those who rejoice over us, Awake: the rejoicers over us shall suffer as we have done.

I must now, he continued, hasten thy slaughter, before thou behold mine.—So the fox said within himself, I have fallen into the snare with this tyrant, and my present case requireth the employment of artifice and frauds. It hath been said, that the woman maketh her ornaments for the day of festivity; and, in a proverb, I have not reserved thee, O my tear, but for the time of my difficulty:—and if I employ not some stratagem in the affair of this tyrannical wild beast, I perish inevitably. How good is the saying of the poet!—

Support thyself by guile; for thou livest in an age whose sons are like the lions of a forest;

And brandish around the spear of artifice, that the mill of subsistence may revolve;

And pluck the fruits; or if they be beyond thy reach, then content thyself with herbage.

He then said to the wolf, Hasten not to kill me, lest thou repent, O courageous wild beast, endowed with might and excessive fortitude.

* It is a common custom of the religious devotees among the Muslims to wear woollen garments.

If thou delay, and consider what I am about to tell thee, thou wilt know the desire that I formed ; and if thou hasten to kill me, there will be no profit to thee in thy doing so ; but we shall die here together.— So the wolf said, O thou wily deceiver, how is it that thou hopest to effect my safety and thine own, that thou askest me to give thee a delay ? Acquaint me with the desire that thou formedst.—The fox replied, As to the desire that I formed, it was such as requireth thee to recompense me for it well ; since, when I heard thy promises, and thy confession of thy past conduct, and thy regret at not having before repented, and done good, and when I heard thy vows to abstain from injurious conduct to thy companions and others, and to relinquish the eating of the grapes and all other fruits, and to impose upon thyself the obligation of humility, and clipping thy claws, and breaking thy dog-teeth, and to wear wool, and offer sacrifice to God (whose name be exalted !), if He delivered thee from thy present state, I was affected with compassion for thee, though I was before longing for thy destruction. So when I heard thy profession of repentance, and what thou vowedst to do if God delivered thee, I felt constrained to save thee from thy present predicament. I therefore hung down my tail that thou mightest catch hold of it and make thine escape. But thou wouldst not relinquish thy habit of severity and violence, nor desire escape and safety for thyself by gentleness. On the contrary, thou pullest me in such a manner that I thought my soul had departed : so I became a companion with thee in the abode of destruction and death ; and nothing will effect the escape of myself and thee but one plan. If thou approve of this plan that I have to propose, we shall both save ourselves ; and after that, it will be incumbent on thee to fulfil that which thou hast vowed to do, and I will be thy companion.— So the wolf said, And what is thy proposal that I am to accept ? The fox answered, That thou raise thyself upright ; then I will place myself upon thy head, that I may approach the surface of the earth, and when I am upon its surface I will go forth and bring thee something of which to take hold, and after that thou wilt deliver thyself. But the wolf replied, I put no confidence in thy words ; for the sages have said, He who confideth, when he should hate, is in error :—and it hath been said, He who confideth in the faithless is deceived, and he who maketh trial of the trier will repent, and he who distinguisheth not between circumstances, and attributeth to each its proper success, but regardeth all circumstances alike, his fortune will be small, and his calamities will be many. How excellent also is the saying of the poet !—

Let not your opinion be otherwise than evil ; for ill opinion is among the strongest of intellectual qualities.

Nothing casteth a man into a place of danger like the practice of good, and a fair opinion.

And the saying of another :—

Always hold an evil opinion, and so be safe. Whoso liveth vigilantly, his calamities will be few.

Meet the enemy with a smiling and an open face ; but raise for him an army in the heart to combat him.

And that of another :—

The most bitter of thine enemies is the nearest whom thou trustest in : beware then of men, and associate with them wilily.

Thy favourable opinion of fortune is a weakness : think evil of it, therefore, and regard it with apprehension.

—Verily, rejoined the fox, an evil opinion is not commendable in every case ; but a fair opinion is among the characteristics of excellence, and its result is escape from terrors. It is befitting, O wolf, that thou employ some stratagem for thine escape from thy present predicament ; and it will be better for us both to escape than to die. Relinquish, therefore, thine evil opinion and thy malevolence ; for if thou think favourably of me, I shall not fail to do one of two things : either I shall bring thee something of which to lay hold, and thou wilt escape from thy present situation, or I shall act perfidiously towards thee, and save myself and leave thee ; but this is a thing that cannot be ; for I am not secure from meeting with some such affliction as that which thou hast met with, and that would be the punishment of perfidy. It hath been said in a proverb, Fidelity is good, and perfidy is base. It is fit, then, that thou trust in me ; for I have not been ignorant of misfortunes. Delay not, therefore, to contrive our escape ; for the affair is too strait for thee to prolong thy discourse upon it.

The wolf then said, Verily, notwithstanding my little confidence in thy fidelity, I knew what was in thy heart, that thou desiredst my deliverance when thou wast convinced of my repentance ; and I said within myself, If he be veracious in that which he asserteth, he hath made amends for his wickedness ; and if he be false, he will be compensated by his Lord. So now I accept thy proposal to me ; and if thou act perfidiously towards me, thy perfidy will be the means of thy destruction.—Then the wolf raised himself upright in the pit, and took the fox upon his shoulders, so that his head reached the surface of the ground. The fox thereupon sprang from the wolf's shoulders, and found himself upon the face of the earth, when he fell down senseless. The wolf now said to him, O my friend, forget not my case, nor delay my deliverance.

The fox, however, uttered a loud laugh, and replied, O thou deceived ; it was nothing but my jesting with thee and deriding thee that entrapped me into thy power ; for when I heard thy profession of repentance, joy excited me, and I was moved with delight, and danced, and my tail hung down into the pit ; so thou pullest me, and I fell down to thee. Then God (whose name be exalted !) delivered me from thy hand. Wherefore, then, should I not aid in thy destruction, when thou art of the associates of the Devil ? Know that I dreamt yesterday that I was dancing at thy wedding, and I related the dream to an interpreter, who said to me, Thou wilt fall into a frightful danger, and escape from it. So I knew that my falling into thy power and my escape was the interpretation of my dream. Thou too knowest, O deceived idiot, that I am thine enemy. How then dost thou hope, with thy little sense and thine ignorance, that I will deliver thee, when thou hast heard what rude language I used ? And how shall I endeavour

to deliver thee, when the learned have said, that by the death of the sinner are produced ease to mankind and purgation of the earth. Did I not fear that I should suffer, by fidelity to thee, such affliction as would be greater than that which may result from perfidy, I would consider upon means for thy deliverance.—So when the wolf heard the words of the fox, he bit his paw in repentance.* He then spoke softly to him ; but obtained nothing thereby. With a low voice he said to him, Verily, you tribe of foxes are the sweetest of people in tongue, and the most pleasant in jesting ; and this is jesting in thee ; but every time is not convenient for sport and joking.—O idiot, replied the fox, jesting hath a limit which its employer transgresseth not. Think not that God will give thee possession of me after He hath delivered me from thy power.—The wolf then said to him, Thou art one in whom it is proper to desire my liberation, on account of the former brotherhood and friendship that subsisted between us ; and if thou deliver me, I will certainly recompense thee well. But the fox replied, The sages have said, Take not as thy brother the ignorant and wicked ; for he will disgrace thee, and not honour thee : and take not as thy brother the liar ; for if good proceed from thee he will hide it, and if evil proceed from thee he will publish it. And the sages have said, For everything there is a stratagem, except death ; and everything may be rectified, except the corruption of the very essence ; and everything may be repelled, except destiny. And as to the recompense that thou assertest I deserve of thee, I compare thee, in thy recompensing, to the serpent fleeing from the Hawi,† when a man saw her in a state of terror, and said to her, What is the matter with thee, O serpent ? She answered, I have fled from the Hawi ; for he seeketh me ; and if thou deliver me from him, and conceal me with thee, I will recompense thee well and do thee every kindness. So the man took her, to obtain the reward, and eager for the recompense, and put her into his pocket ; and when the Hawi had passed and gone his way, and what she feared had quitted her, the man said to her, Where is the recompense ? for I have saved thee from that which thou fearedst and dreadedst. But the serpent answered him, Tell me in what member I shall bite thee ; for thou knowest that we exceed not this recompense. She then inflicted upon him a bite from which he died.—And thee, O idiot, continued the fox, I compare to that serpent with that man. Hast thou not heard the saying of the poet ?—

Trust not a person in whose heart thou hast made anger to dwell ; nor think his anger hath ceased.

Verily, the vipers, which are smooth to the touch, and shew graceful motions, hide mortal poison.

—O eloquent and comely-faced animal, rejoined the wolf, be not ignorant of my condition, and of the fear with which mankind regard me. Thou knowest that I assault the strong places, and strip the vines. Do, therefore, what I have commanded thee, and attend to me as the

* "Biting one's hand" is a common expression of the Arabs, similar to ours of "biting one's lip."

† The Hawi is a performer of sleight-of-hand tricks, and various feats with serpents, &c.

slave attendeth to his master.—O ignorant idiot, who seekest what is vain, exclaimed the fox, verily I wonder at thy stupidity, and at the roughness of thy manner, in thine ordering me to serve thee and to stand before thee as though I were thy slave. But thou shalt soon see what will befall thee, by the splitting of thy head with stones, and the breaking of thy treacherous dog-teeth.

The fox then stationed himself upon a mound overlooking the vineyard, and cried out incessantly to the people of the vineyard until they perceived him and came quickly to him. He remained steady before them until they drew near unto him and unto the pit in which was the wolf, and then he fled. So the owners of the vineyard looked into the pit, and when they beheld the wolf in it, they instantly pelted him with heavy stones, and continued throwing stones and pieces of wood upon him, and piercing him with the points of spears, until they killed him, when they departed. Then the fox returned to the pit, and, standing over the place of the wolf's slaughter, saw him dead ; whereupon he shook his head in the excess of his joy, and recited these verses :—

Fate removed the wolf's soul, and it was snatched away. Far distant
 [from happiness] be his soul that hath perished !
 How long hast thou striven, Abu-Sirhan,* to destroy me ! But now
 have burning calamities befallen thee.
 Thou hast fallen into a pit into which none shall descend without
 finding in it the blasts of death.

After this the fox remained in the vineyard, alone and in security, fearing no mischief.

* An appellation of the wolf.

NOTES ON TEXT

Abbreviations: B, Breslau edition.

C200, Calcutta edition of first 200 Nights.

CT, Cairo text.

¹ King of the dynasty of Sāsān, CT, B, but not C200.

² So C200; Shahrabāz, CT; Shahrabān, B. In C200 the elder brother is called King of Samarkand, and the younger, King of China.

³ So most copies; 570 seal-rings, CT.

⁴ Either I shall live or I shall be a ransom for the daughters of the Muslims, and a cause of their deliverance from him, CT.

⁵ C200 adds, Hast thou not heard the poet say—

I occupy myself every day and night in anxious service of him in
whose prosperity I have no enjoyment;

Like the bleacher who blackens his face in the sun, while he
watches the whitening of the clothes of others.

⁶ Naṭ'an, C200; Ḫiṭa'an, CT.

⁷ CT omits in a garden.

⁸ This paragraph and the verses are from C200.

⁹ So C200; 'Efrītēh, CT.

¹⁰ C200 omits story of third Sheykh; CT is fuller than the translation.

¹¹ So CT and C200; some copies give Melik el-Yūnān, "King of the Greeks."

¹² So C200; in the city of the Persians and the country of Rūmān, CT.

¹³ As King Sindibād repented of killing the falcon, CT, and thus is introduced an indifferent story in the place of that of the Husband and the Parrot, which occurs in C200 and B.

¹⁴ Kharābeh; erroneously jezīreh in CT.

¹⁵ CT gives four poetical quotations.

¹⁶ Verses from C200; those in CT are less apposite.

¹⁷ Another verse follows in CT, omitted here as inapposite.

¹⁸ Wine, C200; CT omits.

¹⁹ CT gives a list of these sweets.

²⁰ In the midst, CT.

²¹ The ladies have no names in the original; in the old translation they are called Zubeydeh, Ṣāfiyeh (the portress), and Āmineh (the cateress).

²² Lit. two nusfs, i.e. halves, a name given to the Mu'eyyadī half-dirhems in the 15th century. Two dirhems, C200.

²³ Three cups, CT.

²⁴ Telkumuħu in two texts; tukellimuħu, CT.

²⁵ I here pass over an extremely objectionable scene.

²⁶ Karendelis, "miserable or ridiculous beggars," C200, B; ṣa'ālīk, "paupers, mendicants," CT. Old translation "Calendars," i.e. Kalenderi darwishes, who shaved their beards: the order was not founded until the 11th century.

²⁷ Verses by Ibn-Sahl of Seville, according to Et-Tanṭīwī: three concluding verses and another poetical quotation following (in CT) are here omitted.

²⁸ Some confusion in the text between the several ladies is here amended.

²⁹ The third song of the cateress and the mention of its effects are omitted.

³⁰ Read a'jām for el-hojjām.

³¹ Here and later read ḥaṭṭābīn for kheyyāṭīn, CT, and khaṭṭābīn, B.

³² This couplet is inserted in place of four verses which seem to be a corruption of it.

³³ From C200; the story is omitted in CT.

³⁴ Last words omitted in CT.

³⁵ Father is King of the Ebony Islands, CT and B, erroneously.

³⁶ The rest of the story of the third Royal Mendicant is almost wholly omitted in CT; it is here translated chiefly from C200.

³⁷ Here the CT is resumed.

³⁸ So C200 and B.

³⁹ To El-Baṣrah, in original, inconsistently with sequel.

⁴⁰ 'Efrītēh in original, improperly.

⁴¹ Lit., sons of thine uncle. .

⁴² Miṣr.

⁴³ Shems-ed-dīn the Wezīr, CT.

⁴⁴ This paragraph and the verses are from C200.

⁴⁵ Inserted from a later passage.

⁴⁶ The woman who applies the ḥinnā dye is called munaḳḳisheh, and the woman who tires or combs and plaits the hair, māshiṭah.

⁴⁷ So C200 and B; prodigal, CT.

⁴⁸ So B; but not in CT.

⁴⁹ Fifteen years, CT.

⁵⁰ Ez-Zebedāniyeh, CT. Er-Reydāniyeh is a tract to the north of Cairo, where travellers arriving from Syria generally halted.

⁵¹ Ten, CT.

⁵² The last verse is wanting in CT, but is inserted from Night 75, where the same poem recurs.

⁵³ El-Baṣrah, C200; China, CT; El-Baṣrah and Kajkār, B. The story is purely Arab.

⁵⁴ Early in the morning, CT.

⁵⁵ CT omits Ezra's Ass.

⁵⁶ El-Jawāli, CT, a copyist's error.

⁵⁷ Jirgis, CT; Jarkash, B; Ibn-Khallikān states that Jahārkās is a Persian name (chahār-kas), signifying "four persons."

⁵⁸ Probably sūk is omitted in text.

⁵⁹ Translator's slight interpolation.

⁶⁰ [I would read Darb El-Munkadīhī, a street which (probably before 1350) was renamed Darb El-Emīr Bektemir El-Ustāddār. S. L.-P.]

⁶¹ The rest of this paragraph and the next two paragraphs, omitted in CT, are translated almost entirely from C200; in a small part from B.

⁶² The rest of this paragraph is from C200.

⁶³ Lit., Mother of the World.

⁶⁴ 763, CT; 673, B.

⁶⁵ So CT; El-Mustansīr bi-llāh, B.

⁶⁶ I have altered the order in which the brothers are described, and omitted two particulars, to agree with the sequel.

⁶⁷ This paragraph is from C200, being omitted in CT.

⁶⁸ Bakbak, CT; in another place, Yakyāk.

⁶⁹ El-‘Ashshār, CT. Most copies appear to read En-Neshshār [“Al Naschar”], “the Sawyer.” I have substituted El-Feshshār, “the Foolish Talker” or “Vain Boaster,” which in the Arabic closely resembles both.

⁷⁰ Sons of the Kings, CT.

⁷¹ Mo‘allakah, a structure raised upon pillars.—Ghadā, a very inflammable tree, resembling the tamarisk. [Palgrave says it is of the genus Euphorbia and peculiar to Arabia. See Lane, *Arabic Lex.*, s.v., vol. v. p. 2269.]

⁷² Omitted in CT.

⁷³ Damascus supplied from a subsequent passage.

⁷⁴ In CT, but extremely objectionable and unfit to be here translated.

⁷⁵ From this point to the relation of the stratagem employed by Zubeydeh I omit much that is unsuitable for translation.

⁷⁶ The story of King ‘Omar En-No‘mān, occupying Nights 44-107 and 137-145 (interrupted by the story of Tūj-el-Mulūk, 107-137), or in length nearly one-eighth of the whole work, is here omitted.

⁷⁷ Kaṣabeh.

⁷⁸ From this point to the end the story of ‘Azīz and ‘Azīzeh is somewhat condensed in the translation.

⁷⁹ I read nimshēh (also written nimjah and nimjāh, from Pers. nīmjhāh) instead of kamshēh.

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